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VOLUME II
CHIEFLY THEOLOGICAL

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VOLUME II
CHIEFLY THEOLOGICAL

BY

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XXV

THE THEOLOGY OF SCHLEIERMACHER, AS ILLUSTRATED BY HIS LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE[1]

I. On the fifteenth of February, 1834, the city of Berlin witnessed a remarkable funeral. Twelve students of the university bore upon their shoulders a coffin covered with a black pall, upon which rested a large copy of the Bible. Twenty-four other students served as a guard of honor. Then came a procession on foot fully a mile in length, and this was followed by a hundred mourning coaches, those of the king and of the crown prince leading the way. Along the whole line of march the streets were bordered with dense crowds of reverent spectators, while additional thousands awaited the cortège at the cemetery. It was a day of universal sorrow, for the people of the German capital felt that their greatest intellectual and spiritual light had been put out. It was the funeral of Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher.

To study Schleiermacher is to study a great man and a great life. Few men in history have so united intellectual acumen with tenderness of heart. He had extraordinary breadth of learning, but he had also an independent mind and the courage to stand for his convictions. He taught New Testament introduction and interpretation, church history and the history of philosophy, dogmatic and practical theology, logic, psychology and metaphysics, philosophical and Christian ethics, æsthetics, pedagogics, and politics, and his published works on these subjects fill a score of volumes. Side by side with this university teaching proceeded his work as a preacher. For forty years there was scarcely a Sunday on which he did not address crowded congregations. He drew to hear him the wealth, the culture, the influence of Berlin. But the poor came as well as the rich, the unlettered as well as the learned, for he spoke of great things, of the love of God and of country, of communion with Christ and of family duty, of life and of death, until he was esteemed a sort of prophet and oracle, to whom a whole city looked for instruction, inspiration, and comfort, and in whom all men felt that they had a friend.

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[1] Lectures delivered before the McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill., December 5 and 7, 1911.

All this was possible because of a natural warmth of temperament which sought affection, and gave affection in broad and unstinted ways. The life of Schleiermacher was a life of sensibility, of friendship, of love, quite as much as it was a life of intellect. But undiscriminating emotion would never have given him the influence which he exerted upon his contemporaries. What impressed and attracted men was the fact that this tremulous feeling was at the service of a clear judgment, and was used to enforce the claims of truth. He was no repeater of outworn phrases, no follower of current traditions. He was a man of insight; he preached what he had seen and felt; the only authority he recognized was the authority of experience. What he spoke and what he wrote had weight, because it seemed the living utterance of a true man. To many a soul inclined to formalism or to rationalism it was a veritable voice of God, rousing from irreligious slumber and prompting to a spiritual life.

Many great preachers have left no permanent mark upon the thinking of the world. Schleiermacher's influence has been far greater since his death than during his life. He was the pioneer of all our recent theology. In spite of most serious and pernicious errors, he constituted a bridge from the German rationalism of the eighteenth century to the recent German evangelical faith. Before he appeared, it almost seemed that the fruits of the Protestant Reformation had been lost; partly because Luther did not supplement his scriptural doctrine of justification by faith with an equally scriptural doctrine of the church and its ordinances, and partly because he did not establish specifically Christian schools for the training of the ministry, Germany had nearly swung to the extremes of formalism and unbelief. Scarcely a remnant of faith in inspiration, or in any manifestation of the supernatural, was to be found in the universities. Semler interpreted the miracle of turning the water into wine as purely subjective: the beauty of Jesus' discourse made the time pass so quickly at the marriage feast that the guests exclaimed: "What good wine we have had to-day!" No one believed in either the immaculate conception or the bodily resurrection of our Lord. Preachers were fast becoming hypocrites, and preaching was becoming an inculcation of motiveless and perfunctory ethics. Schleiermacher wrought a revolution by turning attention anew to the majestic and sinless Christ, and to the effects of Christ's life and death in Christian experience. Man's need of Christ and Christ's supply of man's need—these fundamental truths of religion were proclaimed with such conviction and feeling as to make a new epoch in theology. The new faith had many shortcomings, and to them I shall call attention. Still it is true that for its salutary and lasting influence upon modern thought we must put the "*Christliche Glaube*," or System of Doctrine, of Friedrich Schleiermacher next to the "Institutes" of John Calvin.

To a certain extent his teaching was a reform of theology. It could not have been this if it had been an attack from without; it was this, because it was a growth from within. That growth sloughed off many harmful excrescences and restored Christian doctrine to something nearer its original simplicity. And yet through his whole life Schleiermacher rejected elements of truth so important as the personal preexistence and objective atonement of Jesus Christ, while God and immortality were conceived in so pantheistic a fashion that many calm critics have regarded him as an enemy to the Christian faith. To the student of philosophy and theology his positions are curiously interesting; to understand him is to understand the theology of our time. But he cannot be understood without a knowledge of his life and early surroundings; to these I therefore address myself, with the hope that they may help us to interpret his doctrine.

Schleiermacher was born on the twenty-first day of November, 1768, and he was sixty-five years of age when he died. He was the son of a poor army chaplain of the Reformed Church, at that time stationed at Breslau, in Silesia. As the regiment to which he was attached moved hither and thither, the father was for long periods absent from home, and the boy's early training was given him for the most part by his intelligent and pious mother. She was a daughter of the Rev. Mr. Stubenrauch, chaplain in ordinary to the king. She recognized in her son an unusual precocity, but she was by no means blind to his faults, for when his facility in memorizing the Latin grammar at his first school made him conceited, she strove to subdue his pride by appealing to his religious nature and awakening his gratitude to God.

From his twelfth to his fourteenth year he attended a boarding-school at Pless, where an enthusiastic teacher inspired him with love for the classics and a desire for literary fame. Yet a strange skepticism took possession of him here. For a time he doubted the genuineness of all the ancient authors. He concealed these doubts, but he was troubled by them, and resolved some day to make personal investigation as to their truth. When his father spoke to him of the depravity to be found in most large schools, and proposed to send him to the educational establishment of the United Brethren at Niesky, in Upper Lusatia, young Schleiermacher welcomed the change, for the innocent piety of the young people at the Moravian school greatly attracted him. Here was a refuge from doubt and from temptation. With his sister he passed two years in preparatory studies at Niesky, and two more years in the college at Barby.

These four years, from fifteen to nineteen, spent among the Moravians in the still air of delightful studies and in association with Christians more simple, missionary, and devout than any others then living, were the best part of his education. Here were a people to whom Christ was a reality, a living presence in the heart. Communion with him was the greatest joy, the only real joy, of their earthly existence. Scripture was as much Christ's word as if he had spoken it audibly into their ears. His cross was the center of all history, the source of all hope, the theme of all praise. They lived and labored that they might spread the knowledge of his salvation to the uttermost ends of the earth, and many a martyr from among their number had left his bones in Greenland, in Africa, and in the West Indian Isles. It is a great gift of God to be permitted to know one believer who lives in constant companionship with Christ; for, once seen, such a one can never be forgotten. Among the Moravians Schleiermacher saw many such. Their childlike piety made indelible impression upon him—indeed, may we not say, he made their piety his own?

In letters written about this time to his sister, he tells her that the pressure of external duties may be borne with a Christian spirit:

> The heart may, nevertheless, feel the peace and the love of Jesus, as I can assert from my own experience, thanks to his mercy. . . Neither my love for winter nor my hatred to summer disturbs the cheerful state of my mind; but when I find that I do not love the Saviour enough, that I do not sufficiently honor him; when the daily intercourse with him does not go on uninter-

> rupted, then I am disturbed. But as often as we draw near to him, feeling ourselves sinners who can only be saved through his mercy, as often as we pray to him for a look of grace, we never go away from him empty. He never abandons us, however much we may deserve it; yet the more undisturbed our minds, the better, the more consistent, the more tranquil, the nearer to heaven—happiest would it be, were we there altogether. But his will be done; it is the best.

The Moravians had a meeting for strangers of other churches than their own, and to whom they ministered. These strangers were called the *Diaspora*—those who are scattered abroad. The parents of Schleiermacher probably had this kind of connection with the Brotherhood. With reference to one of these meetings the boy writes:

> Yesterday I was for the second time, through the grace of the Saviour, permitted to be a looker-on. "I will receive you unto myself," was the text of yesterday; and as regards me also he will graciously fulfil this promise. He has risen from the dead to help all miserable sinners on earth, and therefore I also have a part in him. He alone is my stay—the God who died for me upon the cross. . . Ah! did but the love of Christ fill our hearts day and night, were we but always acceptable in his sight, were we but in constant uninterrupted communion with him, did we but cling to him so that not even for one moment we could be drawn away from him! . . I have been an apprentice in the community somewhat more than two years. This is not a very long time, yet in this short period how much have I experienced—much evil as regards myself, and much mercy as regards the Saviour! "I have merited wrath," say I on my side; "I have atoned for thee," cries the Lamb from the cross. . . When I look back upon my life of seventeen years, I recognize so many remarkable proofs of the kind and merciful guidance of the Lord, and of his watchfulness over all circumstances relating even to the meanest of his rational creatures, that I feel compelled to prostrate myself in the dust, and to say: "With what mercy and patience and love thou hast led me, O Lord!"

I have quoted these youthful experiences only to show that Schleiermacher was no wilful opposer of established beliefs, but that he was rather the possessor of a naïve and simple faith like that of the Moravian Brethren around him. The memory of those early days was sacred to him. Sixteen years afterward, when he had made for himself a name in the world of letters, he made a visit to his old school, and of it he then wrote:

> There is no other place that could call forth such lively reminiscences of the whole forward movement of my mind, from its first awakening to a higher life up to the point which I have at present attained. Here it was that for the first time I awoke to the consciousness of the relations of man to the higher world. . . Here it was that the mystic tendency developed itself, which has been of so much importance to me, and has supported and carried me through all the forms of skepticism. Then it was only germinating; now it has attained its full development; and I may say that, after all I have passed through, I have become a Herrnhuter (Moravian) again, only of a higher order.

His sister Charlotte became a regular member of the Moravian Society, and remained so till she died. His bosom friend, Von Albertine, with whom at this time he devoured the Old Testament and the Greek poets, remained with the brethren, and became a bishop and a hymn-writer among them. But as Satan appeared even among the sons of God, so Herrnhut could not shut out the questionings of an acute and growing intellect. His autobiography is instructive here:

> I had already sustained manifold internal religious conflicts. The doctrine of eternal punishment and reward had already exercised a disturbing power over my childish imagination, and in my eleventh year I spent several sleepless nights in consequence

of not being able to come to a satisfactory conclusion concerning the mutual relation between the sufferings of Christ and the punishment for which these sufferings were the substitute. Now commenced another struggle generated by the views held among the United Brethren relative to the doctrines of the natural corruption of man and of the supernatural means of grace, and the manner in which these doctrines were interwoven with every discourse and every lesson. . . My convictions soon differed so widely from the system adopted by the Brethren that I thought I could no longer conscientiously remain a member of the congregation, and the utterances of my ideas also became so distinct that the attention of the superiors was attracted. . . In vain was every means of conversion employed; I could no longer be drawn out of the path I had entered; but long after, I still felt the exhaustion consequent upon the immense exertions I was obliged to make.

The letter in which he announced to his father this change in his views is a very pathetic one: I make brief extracts from it:

Alas, dearest father, if you believe that, without faith, no one can attain to salvation in the next world nor to tranquillity in this—and such, I know, is your belief—oh! then pray God to grant it to me, for to me it is now lost. I cannot believe that he who called himself the Son of man was the true eternal God; I cannot believe that his death was a vicarious atonement, because he himself never expressly said so; and I cannot believe it to have been necessary, because God, who evidently did not create men for perfection, but for the pursuit of it, cannot possibly intend to punish them eternally because they have not attained it. . . And now are told these tidings which must be so terribly startling to you. Try to enter into my feelings, and you will perhaps be able in some measure to understand what it must have cost me to write these lines, devoted to you, as I am, my good father, with such tender filial affection, acknowledging as I do your great love for me, and being conscious that I owe everything to you. . . Comfort yourself, dear father, for I know you were long in the same state that I am now. Doubts assailed you at one time as they now do me, and yet you have become what you are. Think, hope, believe, that the same may

> be the case with me. . . If your circumstances will at all admit of it, pray, allow me to go to Halle, if only for two years.

He wished to go to Halle, because in the college at Barby he was not permitted to read, and no one would even refute his objections. The father's reply shows how crushing was the blow, and how incapable he was of comprehending his son's mental struggles:

> Oh, thou foolish son! who has bewitched thee that thou no longer obeyest the truth? thou, before whose eyes Christ was set forth, and who now crucifiest him! . . O my son, my son, how deeply dost thou humble me! What sighs dost thou call forth from my soul! . . Go forth then into the world, whose honors thou art seeking. Try if its husks can satisfy thy soul. . . Alas, into what a state of delusion has the wickedness of thy heart plunged thee! . . And now, O son, whom I press with tears to my sorrowful heart! with heart-rending grief I discard thee, for discard thee I must, as thou no longer worshipest the God of thy fathers, as thou no longer kneelest at the same altar with him. . . But, if it be possible, then listen to the entreaties of thy father who prays: Turn back, my son, turn back! O Lord Jesus, shepherd of the human race, bring back to thyself thy straying lamb! Do it for the glory of thy name! Amen! . . I shall not yet write to Halle, because I hope that the blessing of the Lord may attend my words and my prayers.

At Halle, at this time, his mother's brother was fortunately living. He was professor in the university. Professor Stubenrauch, if he did not sympathize with his nephew, had at least a mind broad enough to bear with him. He interceded with the father, and an outward reconciliation was brought about. No other course was possible but the young man's removing to Halle, living with his uncle, and entering the university. The Moravian Brethren themselves compelled this course, for they regarded such a disseminator of heresy as an incongruous element in their community, and they refused to harbor him longer. So he entered upon a larger life, free to read what he would and free to express his thoughts. After a time the elder Schleiermacher came to recognize the sincerity of the son, and gave him again the confidence of former years. But it was a trying experience for the boy, and he afterward wrote of his father:

> An unhappy misunderstanding estranged his heart from me for several years. He believed me to be on the road to perdition, and thought me conceited and puffed up, while I was simply following out my deepest convictions, without carrying my thoughts one step further, and without wishing or hoping for anything. . . No wonder that he misunderstood me when I withdrew from a society to which he was greatly attached, and in which he had placed me in accordance with my own wishes, and with great hopes of saving me from the united power of the world and of those skeptical tendencies in me which did not escape his observation. He attributed to the inspirations of a vainglorious heart, and to an impious desire to throw myself into the abyss of skepticism, that which was only the effect of my sense of truth, without any desire for or repugnance toward whatever might be the result. Far from loving the vanities of the world, I feared them and, had I known of any other retreat like the Herrnhut establishments to which I could fly from them, I would have fled thither in preference. . . I suffered much in consequence. I thought what a beautiful relation there might have been between us, and that it was not! And yet without any fault on my side. I was touched by his tender, anxious love, which, in spite of the sorrow I caused him, was never withdrawn from me. But you know how I am; I never took any decided steps to draw him nearer to me, but went on my quiet way, fearing that explanations on my side might only produce a contrary effect on him. Gradually, however, his understanding and his judgment took counsel of his heart; but hardly did I hold in my hands incontestable proofs that he was again entirely mine, when he was taken from me. Had but the happiness been vouchsafed to me to sweeten his last moments, to close his eyes with filial hand!

And many years after, looking back with affection to these days, he rejoiced that before death took his father from him the breach between them had been healed. He wrote then to his sister:

> There was a period, the remembrance of which now often forces itself upon me, during which I mistook the heart of our excellent father; when I thought he was too hard upon me, and judged me falsely because I was not of the same opinion as he. A certain coldness of feeling, which arose in consequence, now seems to me the darkest spot in my existence. But in secret I have acknowledged my injustice, and he forgave me without my asking it. Afterward I learned to appreciate his heart more truly, and I at least rewarded him with some years of ardent and perfect love and unrestrained confidence.

Here is filial piety as well as personal independence. The correspondence between father and son is creditable to both parties. The flower-pot was too small for the oak to grow in, and the father came to recognize this, and even to rejoice in the growing powers and the larger views of his son.

This assertion of the right of private judgment and refusal to submit to mere authority was characteristic of his after life; the victory was won once for all. The time for passive reception of others' opinions was past; henceforth he thought for himself. It was not to be expected that he should attend assiduously upon the lectures of professors. His studies were fragmentary; he read omnivorously; Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Novalis—these were his real teachers. He mingled little with other students; like a true Moravian, he kept up his private devotions and sought help from God; he was eager only to know the truth. A spirit like his was rare at that time. The old pietism of Halle had come to an end. It was an age of bald rationalism. Semler, the father of German neology, and Wolf, the higher critic of Homer, were the men of greatest note at the university. All the influences of the place were averse both to spirituality and to supernaturalism. It is no wonder that these influences conspired with his natural tendencies to make him the theologian that he was.

Schleiermacher was as nearly original as a man can well be, yet his originality consisted rather in a novel combination of elements previously existing than in any great new discovery of his own. We can find in Spinoza, in Kant, in Novalis, in Zinzendorf, the separate threads which he wove together into his particolored theology. Chief of all, we must count Spinoza, with his materialistic pantheism. To philosophic minds there has always been a fascination in his doctrine of the one and simple substance which is known to us through the two attributes of thought and of extension, mind being God in the form of thought, and matter being God in the form of extension. Here, apparently, is the unity which all science seeks, and the system sounds religious, for it gives to this unity the name of God. Spinoza has been called for this reason "the God-intoxicated man." Unfortunately it was the universe, rather than God, with which Spinoza was intoxicated, for instead of translating the universe into God, he translated God into the universe. His conceptions of God were derived from matter rather than from mind. He knows no such thing as freedom. All the events of the world follow from the nature of the one Substance as the nature of the diameter follows from the nature of the circle. There is no purpose in the universe, no responsibility, no sin. Though his great work is entitled "Ethics," we may, as Doctor Hodge says, for real ethics as profitably consult the "Elements" of Euclid.

Yet the doctrine of one Substance is in another form both scriptural and true. There is a Christian pantheism. There is one supreme Being, of whom and through whom and unto whom are all things. But this Being is subject as well as substance; in fact, is primarily subject and only secondarily substance; and the maintenance of this was the great merit of Hegel. Neither Spinoza nor Hegel, however, reached an Absolute that is strictly personal and that permits the coexistence of finite personalities. When Schleiermacher adopted the system of Spinoza, he adopted the worst form of Monism; his Absolute, instead of containing, really abolishes, all relations; his One really excludes the many. He could believe in no personal distinctions in the Deity, in no inherent divine attributes, in no divine life comparable to the life of man; and similarly, man's personality is minimized, his free will is an illusion, he is the play of cosmic forces for a time, but is soon to be swallowed up in the All.

From Kant Schleiermacher took his doctrine of relativity—the futility and self-contradiction of all theoretical reasoning with regard to freedom, immortality, and God. As Martineau has said: "Kant wrote 'No Thoroughfare' over the reason in its highest exercise." Our *a priori* judgments are simply regulative. Ritschl's "value-judgments" are simply an application to theology of the principle of Kant, as Schleiermacher adopted it. We can know things, Kant would say, not as they are in themselves, but only as they are for us. Behind all this philosophy is the vicious assumption that God is concealed by his own manifestation, that there can be appearances without any things that appear. But that our cognitive faculties should correspond to things as they are, is much more probable than that they should correspond to things as they are not. Human reason does impose its laws and forms upon the universe; but, in so doing, it interprets the real meaning of the universe. In other words, the laws of our knowing are not merely arbitrary and regulative, but correspond to the nature of things. Our reason is not a green glass which gives a false color to the world about us, but rather a binocular microscope, which enables us to see the world as it really is.

The result of Schleiermacher's acceptance of this portion of the Kantian philosophy was his decrying of rational theology, and his denial that we have objective knowledge of God. Theology became a mere account of devout Christian feelings, the grounding of which in external facts, either historical or ontologic, was matter of comparative indifference. Religion was a merely subjective thing. Here he did not follow Kant's later but rather his earlier thinking, for Kant, in his "Critique of the Practical Reason," came to accept as postulates those same truths with regard to freedom, immortality, and God which, in his "Critique of Pure Reason," he had declared could never be theoretically attained. Schleiermacher in this respect followed Fichte rather than Kant. The noblest part of Kant's doctrine—that of the "Ethics," with its categorical imperative and the intimation it gives of a higher personality than our own—did not appeal to him, and we find little reference in his writings to conscience in man or to holiness in God. Kant's critical idealism he could accept, but not Kant's recognition of the voice of Another in our moral nature. If he had followed Kant fully, he might have been saved from the evil part of Spinoza's influence, and might have believed far more strongly in a personal and a righteous God.

Spinoza's one substance and Kant's critical idealism left little room for a religion of intellect or of will. Yet Schleiermacher's own experience convinced him that religion was a blessed reality. When he came to explain it, he could assign it only to the realm of feeling. He gave up the attempt to ground Christian experience in objective facts, whether of history or of revelation. But there was an internal element which criticism could not destroy. It was the element of emotion. He defined religion, therefore, as the feeling of absolute dependence. He followed Novalis and the romantic school. Novalis had said that all absolute emotion is religion. Certainly there is a grain of truth here. The feeling of the infinite in the finite—without this no religion is possible. But then, religion is not the *mere* feeling of dependence, for such feeling is not religious unless exercised toward a personal and holy God, and unless accompanied by the moral effort to be like him. Schleiermacher confines religion to the feeling of absolute dependence, and so excludes from it both reflective thought and ethical activity. He combated a false intellectualism, a dry orthodoxy, an unbelieving rationalism, a frivolous æstheticism, and in this he was right. But he left the emotions without their proper rational basis of conviction, and without their proper practical effects in a holy life.

For religion is a life—a life in God, or, in other words, a life lived in recognition of God, in communion with God, and under control of the indwelling Spirit of God. Since it is a life, it cannot be described as consisting solely in the exercise of any one of the powers of intellect, affection, or will. As physical life involves the unity and co-operation of all the organs of the body, so religion, or spiritual life, involves the united working of all the powers of the soul. To feeling we may, indeed, assign the logical priority, since holy affection toward God, imparted in regeneration, is the condition of truly knowing God and of truly serving him. But unless the feeling of dependence has a proper object, it may be very irreligious. The heart needs a guide; we must not apotheosize it, but must put it under rational control; otherwise we may become a prey to most ignoble impulses. Schleiermacher's religion is not really Christianity, for it recognizes no objective norm or revelation. It is a purely subjective phenomenon, a purely natural product. And though he declares the natural to be itself supernatural, and the religious feeling to be itself a revelation of God, it is plain to see that Christianity to him is only one of many religions, differing not in kind, but only in degree, from the heathen religions that had preceded it.

I have thus attempted to group together the philosophical and literary influences which contributed to the formation of Schleiermacher's theological opinions. They all began to work upon him during his three years at Halle, though he felt some of them more strongly after other years had passed. Let us not forget, however, that the philosophical and literary equipment was sought and accepted only as a means of defining to himself and of publishing to others what he regarded as the essential truth of Christian experience. That truth he regarded himself as having never abandoned. Six years after leaving Halle he could write:

> How sweetly do we all cleave with the same pious feeling to the loving and informing Christ! Never since I left the Herrnhut congregation have I so rejoiced in my Christian feelings and in my Christian faith, nor have I beheld its living power so spread around me.

His Moravian training left its permanent impressions in the strongly Christological character of his system. In his preaching he found an inexhaustible mine in the relations of the Christian to Christ and the ways in which the Christian life is developed by the truth of Christ. In his later life he sums up all by saying:

> Luther and Melancthon, Calvin and Zwingli, and their various fellow-laborers, were not creators of a new state of things, but merely instruments in the hands of divine Providence, and it is and ever will be their highest glory that they were found worthy to be such. They produced nothing new, but merely cleansed the old doctrine from the rubbish that had been heaped upon it, so that it could appear again in its pristine purity and commend itself thus to men. The work of the Reformation was not, therefore, to found a Lutheran Church—against which indeed

> no one protested more warmly than Luther himself—nor was it to found a Reformed Church, but to bring forth in renewed glory the Evangelical Church, which is guided and governed by its founder, Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. He is the quickening center of the church; from him comes all, to him all returns; he is the Beginning and the End; in him we believe, and through him alone we are blessed.

It is not my intention to speak of his subsequent life except as it illustrates and explains his theology. He left the university without any fixed system, yet with the hope of constructing one. In 1790, at the age of twenty-two, he was licensed as a preacher. Through Sack, chaplain to the king of Prussia, he was made tutor in the family of Count Dohna, of Schlobitten, in East Prussia. Here the young man, who had been hitherto unacquainted with the world, came first into association with cultivated women, and from them he learned much that books could not impart. In 1794 he was ordained, and became assistant to his uncle at Landsberg on the Wartha. As he entered upon the work of an active ministry he wrote to his father:

> From my heart I do wish that God's blessing may be upon my sermons, so that they may be sources of true edification and may speak to the heart, as I trust they will ever come from the heart. To you I need not say how deeply I am moved at the thought of being numbered among those to whom so important an office is entrusted, nor need I assure you that I do not now, and never shall, look upon it merely as a means of livelihood. . . I am persuaded that I really possess the religion which it is my duty to promulgate, even if my philosophy is quite different from that of most of my hearers. Nor is there in me any unworthy prudence or mental reservation. I attribute to words precisely that meaning which is assigned to them by every man engaged in religious contemplation, nothing more and nothing less.

Herrnhut had greatly influenced him, yet even upon the Moravian piety Schleiermacher put his own peculiar stamp. He could truly say:

> My way of thinking has, indeed, no other foundation than my own peculiar character, my inborn mysticism, my education as it has been determined from within.

That peculiar experience he felt it his mission to express. It determined his whole conception of his ministerial office. Preaching, to his mind, was not an attempt to convince and convert; it was simply self-revelation on the part of the preacher. That conception dominates the homiletics of Germany to this day. That German preaching is not evangelistic, but only encouraging and consolatory, is due to the example and influence of Schleiermacher.

After two years of faithful pastoral labor at Landsberg, he removed to Berlin, where he became chaplain at the Charité Hospital. He spent the next six years, from 1796-1802, in literary circles, eagerly drinking in the influences of art, society, and politics. Romanticism was the current tendency, and romanticism is belief in subjective emotions as the highest manifestation of God. It is the deification of sensibility, without regard to its nature. Frederick Schlegel, Tieck, Novalis, Herder, and Goethe were its chief representatives. It is easy to see how such a method of thought would fit in with Schleiermacher's experience. It was an unmoralized religion, which deprived the affections of their regulative principle, and which consecrated much that was illicit and even satanic. The young preacher did not wholly escape its evil effects. For four or five years he permitted himself to indulge in an attachment to the childless and unhappy wife of a Berlin clergyman, which never transgressed outward propriety, but which came dangerously near to the coveting of his neighbor's wife.

Let us remember Schleiermacher's depth of sympathy, his delight in giving and receiving confidences, his longing for affection, his dependence upon others, and we shall somewhat better understand him. He loved his male friends, Steffens and Willich, with a warmth that pressed them to his heart and opened to them his whole nature. And with good women he fell in love at first sight. To that brilliant and beautiful leader of society, Henrietta Herz, he could at one time devote all his afternoons, and with her he could spend whole days in the absence of her husband. To Eleonore Grunow, the clergyman's wife whom I have mentioned, he could write such letters as these:

> Who was ever so happy as to understand you before I came? . . Do you know with what I am tempted to compare you? With a magnet that has wrapped itself in iron-filings, because it has never found a solid bit of iron to attract. When such a bit arrives, it does not recognize you on account of those surroundings, but at the most, has a vague feeling of your presence, and everything depends upon a bold grasp that shall shake off the filings. . . Among all the minds that have stimulated mine and contributed to its development, there is not one whose influence on my heart, and on the purer presentment of my inner being, can be compared to yours; and this grateful conviction is the sweetest thought I can indulge in. But I can tell you nothing about this that I have not already told you, except that each time I feel it with increased vividness and delight. Indeed, what other consolation can I have at this distance from you than this retrospective and prospective view of the sweet relation in which you have stood and will again stand to my life? . . when the thought

> occurred to me, "Of that woman a great deal might be made," I had not yet discovered your innermost being . . . but only your understanding, and you know that the understanding alone makes very little impression upon me. I could not, indeed, have found you in any other way than I did find you—through a revelation of love. . . Did you not also discover my inner being after and through this revelation?

This attachment to Eleonore Grunow went so far that he proposed to her the securing of a divorce from her husband in order that she might marry him. He held that marriage without heart was immoral and ought to be dissolved. Prussian law permitted divorce by mutual consent. The husband gave his consent, but the wife hesitated. Duty and inclination kept up a long struggle within her. When at last, in a paroxysm of compunction, she determined to cleave to her husband and to give Schleiermacher up, the blow to the preacher was crushing. He prayed for death. In his distress he accepted an appointment as court preacher at Stolpe, in Pomerania, and so went into banishment. It was a fortunate banishment. The perilous relation was ended. Reason resumed its sway. Much to his benefit, he broke loose from his æsthetic and literary connections. He began the translation of Plato, which occupied him for many years. Romanticism had had its day. Providence gave him a better wife than Eleonore Grunow. He married the widow of his young friend Willich, a woman twenty years younger than himself, and with her he lived most happily. Fourteen years after the period of danger, when the two accidentally met at a large party, Schleiermacher went up to the lady to whom he had been so attached and, holding out his hand to her, said: "Dear Eleonore, God has dealt kindly with us both."

It is not difficult to perceive the secret of Schleiermacher's power as a preacher. This fresh susceptibility, this sense of the Infinite, this independence of tradition, were seldom so combined. It was a new sensation to conceited rationalists and dead formalists when they heard a young man speak with deep emotion of the divine life which moved in nature and in the soul. This life, he would say, is the life of Christ; without it, man is utterly incapable of good; only as his Spirit dwells in us can we reach the true end of our being. Religion is not only consistent with the highest culture, but there can be no real culture without it. Christ is the source of all art and of all civilization. There is no peace for the State and no dignity for the soul without him. Do you doubt the miraculous stories of the Scripture, and the inspiration of Scripture itself? But these are not essential to the Christian faith—the kingdom of God is within you. You do not need to go back to the past or to believe in a book; Christ is present here and now in the Christian soul; he transforms character to-day; the light of kindness and compassion, of humility and hope and joy, that shines forth from the Christian's face, proceeds from him who is the true and only Light of the World. Is it a wonder that such preaching stirred all Germany as it had not been stirred since the days of Luther, and that it resulted in a genuine religious revival?

The preacher was not remarkable in his personal appearance. He is described as small of stature, slightly humpbacked, but with features of classical regularity; an expression noble, frank, and sympathetic; eyes keen, piercing, and full of fire; movements animated and quick. An intense thoughtfulness was joined to a calm composure of manner; when most deeply moved, he never lost command of himself, and so never lost command of others. Though weak in body, he had an indomitable will; he had trained himself to alertness and attention; nothing that passed seemed to escape him; his only recreation was a change of work; he rose early, and he turned night into day. He gave much time to society, accepting every invitation, and burning the midnight oil long after returning from an evening company. Mingling with his kind seemed essential to his mental health.

Preparation of his sermons was usually made on Saturday evening, when for a few minutes he would leave his guests, go to the stove, to the window, or to the corner of his reception-room, and jot down a few heads of discourse upon a slip of paper not half so large as the palm of his hand. But when the time for their delivery came, he had an unfailing flow both of thought and of language. In the pulpit the dry bones of his sermon were clothed with flesh and blood; he cared nothing for rhetorical finish, everything for his thought; he was *en rapport* with his auditors from the start, made them feel that he was guiding them to a definite conclusion, and that they were in the hands of a man whose sole aim it was to utter to them God's truth and to do them good. He never wrote his sermons in full before delivery, though he revised his friends' reports of them after they had been preached.

He was greater as a speaker than as a writer, for in his speaking there was a deeply penetrative feeling, which his printed sermons fail to reproduce. No preacher ever had more intellectual audiences, for students, professors, government officials, counts and princes, artists and literary men, thronged to hear him preach. It was the eloquence of elevated thought, the natural utterance of one who spoke only because he believed and felt.

Feeling furnishes the key also to his earliest printed works. Only three years after his arrival in Berlin the young preacher published his "Discourses on Religion; Addressed to the Cultivated among its Contemners." No one can read the book without being convinced that its author felt driven to its composition by an irresistible divine call. It has a directness and authority that remind us of the trumpet from Sinai. The reading of it constituted a turning-point in the spiritual life of Neander. Harms called the hour of his first acquaintance with it the hour in which his higher life was born. And yet these "Discourses" were little more than a passionate defense of natural religion, and an appeal to elemental instincts in the heart of man. They could hardly have accomplished so much, had not Germany been sunk in a slough of unbelief. What the condition of things was among the clergy can be best learned from an experience of Schleiermacher himself:

> "Last week," he says, "the synodal assembly of this diocese took place, and the dean was so kind as to invite me to be present. This occupied almost the whole day. How sad it made me! Ah! dear friend, to find myself among thirty-five such clergymen! I did not feel ashamed of belonging to the profession, but with my whole heart I longed for and I pictured to myself

> those future times, which I trust are not far distant, when such an assembly will be impossible. I shall not live to see it, but could I only in some way contribute to bring it about! Of the openly disreputable among them I will not speak, and I would even submit patiently to there being a few such among the great number, particularly as long as the livings are worth only one thousand dollars. But the universal degradation, the entire unsusceptibility to all higher influences, the base and sensuous views —depend upon it, I was the only one among them who mourned in heart, the only one; for had there been another, I must have found him, I knocked and searched so earnestly."

The " Discourses " were the cry of a John the Baptist in the wilderness. They heralded the coming of Christ into many hearts. They marked the transition from cold speculation and religious indifference to a positive faith. At one stroke Schleiermacher became a writer of national reputation. His prophetic voice roused Germany to see once more that deep under every individual flows the stream of an infinite Life, and that man needs most of all a reception of the Eternal.

I must pass over with a bare mention his appointment, in 1804, to a professorship at Halle, where, at the age of thirty-six, he first attempted the scientific teaching of philosophy and theology. He drew the attention of his students, but he taught with peculiar difficulty, for his views were not yet formed, and he was by some called an atheist, by others a pantheist, and by still others a pietist. After two years of this work, he became minister of Trinity Church in Berlin; and when, in 1810, the University of Berlin was founded, he took part in its organization and was its first professor of theology. For twenty-four years he lectured two hours a day on almost every department of philosophy and theology, while at the same time he did full work as preacher on the Sabbath. Side by side with him in the university were Humboldt and Hegel, Marheinecke and De Wette. But in theological circles Neander was the only teacher that could compare with him, and Neander was in a sense his pupil. Students came from all parts of Germany and Switzerland to hear him. His fame speedily filled all northern Europe, and on his visit to Copenhagen, the university of that place honored him with a torchlight procession.

II. What I have said thus far has served to prepare the way for an estimate of Schleiermacher's greatest work, "*Der Christliche Glaube,*" or "The Christian Faith," first published in 1821, when he had reached the age of fifty-three. It may be regarded as the ripe fruit of his manhood, and as marking an epoch in modern theology. It will not be possible to treat the work otherwise than synoptically and in relation to its great leading principles, but I hope to elucidate these principles by references to his correspondence and to his life. Its title is significant. He does not call the book a system of Christian doctrine, as if doctrine were something objective and external. He calls it rather "The Christian Faith," in order to intimate that all theology is subjective, the expression of the common consciousness of believers. This consciousness, moreover, is not primarily intellectual or ethical—it is a state of feeling—the feeling of absolute dependence. Religion is never insight, and it is never action, though it accompanies these, like sacred music.

As this conception of religion is fundamental to Schleiermacher's thinking, it will help our study to trace it to its origin. We remember that among the Moravians he had before him indubitable evidence of hearts that had been changed by divine grace and that were full of love for God and for perishing men. He himself had felt that love springing up within him. But when it came to expressing this love in the doctrinal formulæ of the Brotherhood, his intellect rebelled. When it came to experiencing the visions and the raptures of which the Brethren so often spake, he could only mourn that he was incapable of them:

> "I was thus," he says, "in that state of torture, with producing which our reformers have so frequently been taunted: my belief in the innate moral faculty of man had been taken from me, and as yet nothing had been substituted in its stead. For in vain I aspired after those supernatural experiences, of the necessity of which every glance at myself with reference to the doctrine of future retribution convinced me, of the reality of which externally to myself every lesson and every hymn, yes, every glance at the Brethren, so attractive while under their influence, persuaded me. Yet me they seemed ever to flee, though at times I thought I had seized at least a shadow of them; for I soon perceived that it was no more than the work of my own mind, the result of the fruitless straining of my imagination."

The reality and value of religious feeling, yet the non-existence of any external cause or object of it—this was the conclusion to which Schleiermacher had come when he left the Brotherhood. It remained only to find an internal cause and object. The philosophy of Spinoza enabled him to find God within and to regard every pure emotion as a divine revelation. The universe is God in spatial and temporal form, and each soul becomes truly religious when it emerges from its isolation and comes to see itself as a part of the great whole. The philosophy of Kant enabled him to add the element of relativity: since we cannot penetrate beneath our own experiences or understand things as they are in themselves, we are shut up to the description of our religious feelings and to the inferences we may draw from these as to the nature of the great Being who has caused them. But this great Being, to borrow the language of Hegel, is not a Spirit beyond the stars; he is the Spirit in all spirits. Transcendence is denied; God is conterminous with the universe; the only God is the immanent God.

The breaking down of the barrier between the natural and the supernatural is the first effect of this philosophy, and this is one of Schleiermacher's most important conclusions. Everything is natural; nothing occurs contrary to natural law.[1] But then, since nature is but another name for God, everything is supernatural also, in the sense that it is no product of dead material things, but a working of the one divine Agent in whom all things live, move, and have their being. He called himself "a thoroughgoing supernaturalist," therefore, even though he regarded miracles, inspiration, and even the incarnation, as susceptible of natural explanation. We are to find God not *outside of* nature, but *in* nature. God's working in answers to prayer, in regeneration, and in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not prevent these from being subject to natural law, and from being wrought in purely natural ways. To make this plain, let me quote Schleiermacher himself. The fullest statement of his view occurs in a letter written with reference to the phenomena of mesmerism or animal magnetism:

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[1] Huxley: Everything is matter, but matter is spirit. Lotze: Everything is mechanism, but mechanism is life. Biedermann: Everything is nature, but nature is miracle.

> My opinion in regard to the nature of these mental phenomena and to their truth is this: Any distinction between the natural and the supernatural, between the comprehensible and the incomprehensible, I do not, upon the whole, recognize. Everything is in one sense natural, and in another supernatural. Even that the Son of God was made man, must, in a higher sense, be natural. In what category the magnetic phenomena are to be placed is still a subject of inquiry. . . It may be said in general that, by changes introduced in the physical conditions, certain limits to which the mind is usually subject are for a time removed. To the removal of such limitations, indeed, we owe all that is sublime and divine in the ancient prophecies; for otherwise the men would not have been men, during the period of prophesying or of inspiration, but would have been some other kind of beings. The greatest interest attaching to the higher phenomena of mesmerism is exactly this, that, when well understood, they will tend to throw new light on the original and essential range of the mental capacities of man; and, in connection with this, no doubt, also on many points relating to the Dark Ages and sacred history of all nations. . . The prophetic quality in man, and the fact that the best that is in him originates in vague presentiments, has become clearer to me than ever through my experience with regard to Plato.

It cannot be denied, however, that Schleiermacher identified the supernatural with nature, rather than nature with the supernatural. He was inclined to minimize the miraculous element in Scripture even if he did not disbelieve it altogether. To him miracle was simply the religious name for occurrence; pious people find miracle everywhere; for the majority, however, the natural never seems miraculous until it becomes extraordinary. So with inspiration. God reveals himself to all men. The Scripture writers were only larger and loftier souls, in whom the insight and prescience that belong in some measure to all were more fully developed. They were not thereby delivered from all error. He says:

> There is no more absolute distinction between the true and the false, than there is between the natural and the supernatural. There is no error, even of the most pernicious kind, which has not an admixture of truth, or which is not connected with some truth, and there is no truth that does not include the possibility of error. This holds good even of the old prophets.

Thus by claiming that all men are inspired he shut out all special inspiration of the Scriptures, just as by claiming that all events are miracles he shut out special miracle from the Scripture history. The Bible does not forbid any other book from being a Bible, any more than the wonders of Bible story prevent more common events from being veritable workings of God. The Bible is not so much a revelation as it is the record of a revelation. In all its parts it is mixed with human error; and the Old Testament, as the early effort of man to express the truth inwardly revealed to him, is entitled to little more credence than the sacred books of the heathen. Since all revelation is necessarily internal, the authority of Scripture is altogether subordinate to that of the Christian consciousness.

Extreme as was this doctrine of the divine immanence, it was a great improvement upon the deism of Schleiermacher's time. That nature is throbbing with divine life, and that God has not ceased to dwell in man, were lessons which his age greatly needed to learn. But, in breaking away from deism, did he not fall into the opposite extreme of pantheism? I propose to maintain the seemingly self-contradictory thesis that, while his formulæ were pantheistic, he all the while injected into them a Christian meaning; in other words, that he was striving to express Christian truth in terms of an antichristian philosophy far too narrow and ragged for the sublime form it was intended to clothe.

Pantheism consists of one affirmation and two denials. It affirms that there is but one substance, principle, and ground of being. Christian monism makes this affirmation, equally with pantheism. But pantheism denies two things which Christian monism stoutly affirms. It denies God's transcendence, and it denies God's personality. There can be no doubt that Schleiermacher denied God's transcendence and, so far, he was a pantheist. Did he also deny God's personality? We must grant that he did so in terms; but when we read his accompanying reasons and explanations, we are forced to the conclusion that it was not so much God's personality which he was combating as it was the application to God of certain false definitions of personality, which so limited the divine Being as to make him finite and imperfect like man himself.

In a letter to Jacobi, Schleiermacher points out the essential difference between his own view and that of his friend. He says:

> The foundation of your philosophy was the idea of a personal God, which I denied. . . Because you can see no third alternative, and because you will not deify nature, you deify human consciousness. But, dear friend, in my eyes the one is as much a deification as the other, and this view, that both are deifications,

> is in my opinion the third alternative. . . Are you better able to conceive of God as a person than as *natura naturans?* If you form to yourself a living conception of a person, must not this person of necessity be finite? Can an infinite reason and an infinite will really be anything more than empty words, when reason and will, by differing from each other, also necessarily limit each other? And if you attempt to annul the distinction between reason and will, is not the conception of personality destroyed by the very attempt? . . I maintain that one expression is as good and as imperfect as another; that we cannot form any real conception of the highest Being; but that philosophy properly consists in the perception that this inexpressible reality of the highest Being underlies all our thinking and all our feeling. . . Further than this, I believe, we cannot get.

The phrase *natura naturans,* quoted here with so much approbation, is itself a virtual acknowledgment that Schleiermacher's point of view is that of Spinoza, and it is interesting to compare with this his fervid eulogium of that philosopher in his youthful "Discourses." He is criticizing the idealism of his own day:

> It annihilates the universe, while it professes to create it; reduces it to a mere allegory, to a worthless shadow-image of the one-sided limitation of its own empty consciousness. Offer with me reverently a lock of hair to the *Manes* of the holy and exiled Spinoza! Him the lofty Spirit of the World penetrated; the Infinite was to him the beginning and the end; the universe was his only and eternal love; in holy innocence and deep humility he mirrored himself in the eternal world, and saw how he also was its most lovely mirror; full of religion was he, and full of the Holy Spirit; and therefore too, he stands alone and unapproached, master in his art, but exalted above the company of the profane, without disciples and without rights as a citizen.

So Schleiermacher declares that it matters not whether we regard God as personal or not, so long as we have him in our feeling. God is the unity of the manifold which appears to us as world. God without world is pure mythology. To make God personal is to make him finite. Spinoza's abstract conception of infinity here fetters him. He fails to see that not infinity, but perfection, is the ruling conception, and that just so much infinity belongs to God as is consistent with perfection, and no more. Infinity, therefore, is not identical with the All; it does not include evil as well as good; it is only the infinity of righteousness and love; it is consistent with, nay, it expresses itself in, self-limitation. We who are made in God's image may and must represent him as like ourselves in that which is highest, that is, in that self-consciousness and self-determination which we call personality.

Schleiermacher practically grants all this when he says that his pantheism is entirely compatible with theism. In his early work, called "Monologues," he celebrates the freedom of the human spirit, and declares freedom to be just as important as dependence. And the same man who in his private correspondence denies God's personality asserts in his sermons the belief that prayer is an essential part of religion. Listen to the following:

> To be a religious man and to pray are really one and the same thing. To join the thought of God with every thought of any importance that occurs to us; in all our admiration of external nature, to regard it as the work of his wisdom; to take counsel with God about all our plans, that we may be able to carry them out in his name; and even in our most mirthful hours to remember his all-seeing eye; this is the prayer without ceasing to which we are called, and which is really the essence of true religion.

And here is a prayer with which he prefaced a sermon on the text: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God":

> Heavenly Father, sanctify in thy truth all of us who are here assembled for common supplication, that our hearts may be purified and strengthened by the feeling of thy nearness and by the contemplation of thy love. However elsewhere we may be involved in the turmoil of the world, yet here is the dwelling of holy stillness and rest. Let it be for us all a place of freedom, where the heart oppressed is quickened and restored. However much we may have lost of external possessions, however many hopes of friendship may have been destroyed, here we enjoy a possession of which no power can rob us, here we turn our eyes to a hope that fadeth not away. Oh, that we all may feel rich in the consciousness that we belong to the number of thy children, feel happy and secure in the confidence that thou meanest well and doest well! If this feeling animates our hearts, then shall we rightly look about with the eyes of our spirit; if this rest of the children of God has taken up its abode in us, then shall we view with steadfast glance the course of thy leadings. O holy God, that thy ways may become ours, that we may learn to understand and to use in a manner worthy of thee everything which thou hast prepared for us, this is the aim of our wisdom. We all feel that we are yet far from this; we all fear more or less that it may be dark and comfortless where the light of earthly security and hope goes out; we all strive more or less against the wholesome medicine which offers nothing pleasant to the sick, yet which thou hast mixed for us. Oh, forgive thy children for the weakness from whose oppressive feeling we would be free! and when we draw hither from the world, in order to sink ourselves into the sea of thy love and thy wisdom, do thou move upon us by thy healing Spirit, to purify us more and more from all that displeases thee, and let us go hence mightily encouraged, endowed with the richest blessings, transformed into the image of thy Son, and through him united more intimately with thyself!

Proofs that Schleiermacher's whole life was one of communion with God might be multiplied indefinitely, and yet in terms he denied God's personality. I am persuaded that his quarrel was with the word rather than with the thing, that with his heart he recognized what with his intellect he could not comprehend. With him, as with the Plato whom he so admired, the sense of personality was weak. The freedom he believed in was power to act according to previously dominant motive, rather than power to change motive. In other words, he was a determinist. He regarded man as an effect, not as a cause. The moral element is subordinate to the emotional. His theology is not a theology of conscience, but a theology of the sensibilities. And so the God who is imaged in man is not so much a God of righteousness as he is a God of power; a God who can be identified with the forces of nature, not a God who is above nature and who uses nature for moral ends.

What will be the attributes of this impersonal God? Schleiermacher does not regard these attributes as having any objective existence. They are mere names for our human conceptions of God. Causality is the one all-inclusive category. The attributes are our methods of conceiving the one Cause in its relations to the various phases of our religious feeling. We speak of attributes only to explain our feeling of dependence. There is nothing real in God to correspond to the attributes or to the differences between them. This is practical agnosticism, and a denial that we can have any correct idea of God. The divine nature is simple and ever like itself—a complete reversal of the rule that complexity increases as we rise in the scale of being. All we can with safety assert, he would say, is that our religious feelings must have a cause; there must be a mighty power that accounts for them; of all attributes, therefore, omnipotence is the chief, and all the rest are only modifications of this. Omniscience is the spirituality of omnipotence. Eternity is the timelessness of omnipotence. Holiness is omnipotence as the cause of our human conscience. Justice is omnipotence connecting suffering with sin. Love is omnipotence imparting itself in the work of redemption. Wisdom is omnipotence preparing the world for this self-impartation and determining its order and limitations.

There is a chilly meagerness about these definitions, which produces a very different effect from the representations of Scripture. In the Bible descriptions of God there is a *πλήρωμα*, a variety, a humanity, which Schleiermacher does not recognize, and which better explains religious experience than his philosophy can do. The absolute simplicity which he attributes to the divine Being has its bad influence also when he comes to treat of the Trinity. Here he takes Sabellian ground. There are no hypostatic or ontologic distinctions. God is not eternally Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The so-called persons in the Godhead are only modes of manifestation. There was no personal preexistence of Christ, nor does it appear that the Christ in us is anything more than the influence of his remembered words. And so with regard to the Holy Spirit. He is not a person, distinct from the Son and from the Father; but, as Christ's God-consciousness was simply the being of God in him, so our Christ-consciousness is simply the being of God in us. Schleiermacher knows nothing of a living Christ, nor of a living Holy Spirit; he knows nothing of a continuous personal working of the exalted Redeemer, and nothing of a continuous personal working of the Holy Spirit, taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us.

His identification of God with the universe has prepared us to understand his doctrine of creation and of providence. There is no such thing as creation in the sense of absolute origination of what, without use of preexisting material, for the first time now begins to be. Creation and preservation are only expressions for the absolute dependence of all things upon God. God is not a part of the world, nor himself originated, but all else is from him. The divine activity is not in time, nor had it a beginning, yet it is the cause of all that is. God is only the logical *prius* of the universe: the universe itself is chronologically as eternal as God, and it is inseparable from God. Schleiermacher objected only to that pantheism which is a disguised materialism. He never defined his view as that of idealistic pantheism, though he had much in common with it. As every man is the creator of his own thoughts and volitions, so God is the creator of the world. As man without thought and volition would not be man, so God without the universe would not be God. Thought and volition have their cause in man, but it is not equally true that man has his cause in thought and volition; so the universe has its cause in God, not God in the universe. God and the universe are as inseparable as man and his thought, yet still it is true that the universe is absolutely dependent upon God, not God absolutely dependent upon the universe. This absolute dependence of all things upon God for existence and for continuance is the essential truth at the basis of the doctrines of creation and of providence.

With regard to the existence of angels, he is skeptical. Yet he seems to favor the belief in good angels, while he rejects the belief in bad ones. The Scripture representations of the unfallen spirits that surround God's throne impress him. But, with regard to a personal devil, he finds so many speculative difficulties that he is forced to give up the doctrine altogether. He claims that Christ and his apostles taught nothing original about angels, but simply accommodated themselves to the beliefs of their time. He advises us to pursue the same course. We can talk about angels, without believing in their actual existence, just as we talk about ghosts and fairies. Even if there are such beings, they can have no influence upon us, and we can expect no manifestations of their presence. Yet as personifications of good and of evil, as poetical symbols of opposing principles in individual life and in the world's history, the Scripture representations have their value, and we should not disuse the hymns and prayers in which they form so impressive a rhetorical element.

Though there is no Satan, there certainly is sin. But, with Schleiermacher's imperfect apprehension of personality, will, freedom, responsibility, it was impossible that he should have a very correct or profound view of sin. To his mind sin is not so much the free and wilful violation of known law, as it is the natural result of man's fleshly nature and environment. It is a result of the soul's connection with a physical organism, or, to use Schleiermacher's own words, " sin is a prevention of the determining power of the spirit, caused by the independence of the sensuous functions." The child, he would say, lives at first a life of sense, in which the bodily appetites are supreme. The senses are the avenues of temptation, the physical domineers over the spiritual, and the soul never shakes off the body. Sin is, therefore, a malarious exhalation from the low grounds of human nature, or, to quote once more Schleiermacher's own words, " a positive opposition of the flesh to the spirit." Here too, we have a reference of sin to that which is external, rather than internal, and an appropriation of Spinoza's doctrine of " the inability of reason to control the sensuous affections." Pfleiderer has done good service in pointing out that sin is a contradiction within the spirit itself, and not simply between the spirit and the flesh; and Simon has shown that, while other species of beings live normally and only man fails so to live, the key to this strange and dark contrast between man and his animal ancestry is to be found alone in the fact of the Fall.

Schleiermacher recognized no Fall and, in throwing the blame of sin upon the body rather than upon the spirit, he virtually made God, the author of the body, to be also the author of sin. Sin is a condition of evil into which we are born, rather than a voluntary act of either our first parents or their descendants. As the consciousness of God is holiness, so the lack of this consciousness is sin, and the cause of this lack is so much outside of us that no deep sense of guilt can attach to it. All sin is caused, as well as causal. We can speak of a common act and common guilt of the human race only in the sense that each man naturally repeats the sin of our first father; and that first father's sin is imputed only in the sense that all his descendants do the same. Original sin is not a corruption of nature, but only a complete incapacity to good—an incapacity which belongs to all men apart from God, to us as much as to Adam, and to Adam as much as to us. Death also is a natural provision, and it antedates sin; it cannot be regarded as sin's penalty, except in the sense that the fear and suffering that attend it are due very largely to man's consciousness of transgression. But since sin and death are universal, the need of redemption is universal also.

As sin is alienation from God, or lack of the God-consciousness, so redemption is essentially the removal of this alienation, or the restoration of this God-consciousness. There is no other method of restoration except by the impartation of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ; and, because this impartation is help rendered by another, and a work which we could not accomplish of ourselves, we call it grace. The uniqueness of Christ was that he was sinless, and that he possessed this consciousness of God in its most perfect form. Yet he was not an absolutely supernatural being. His appearance was due indeed to a creative act of God, but only as this is true of every hero or benefactor of the race. Immaculate conception and absence of a human father would add nothing to his greatness, for God can work within the range of natural law all that we commonly attribute to miracle. We must not so conceive of Christ's birth as to destroy the likeness between his nature and ours. He does not claim to be the only mediator between God and man, but only the greatest and most original. The essential thing is that he takes the believer up into his own God-consciousness and consequent blessedness.

Schleiermacher's treatment, ingenious as it is, does not hide the lack of a historical Saviour. Not only are Christ's personal preexistence, equality with the Father, supernatural conception, and bodily resurrection denied—it is even doubtful whether there is recognized any personal existence of Christ since the day of his death. Christian consciousness is not communion with an exalted and yet present and personal Redeemer. It is rather an entering into moral relation with the Absolute and, through the influence of Christ's remembered teaching and example, becoming possessed of a God-consciousness similar to his own. Never in all the prayers with which Schleiermacher was accustomed to preface his sermons is a petition addressed to Christ. The mention of Jesus as a living person seemed to offend him, and in a letter to his wife he writes:

> You have adopted the way of speaking constantly of the Saviour, and placing God quite in the background. If it be the Saviour also who speaks to us from nature, then there can hardly be any direct relation more between us and God. And yet Christ himself seeks above all to impress upon us that through him we come to the Father, and that the Father abides in us. In your way the true simplicity of Christianity is absorbed in some self-made system that Christ would not have approved. . . Dearest heart, do try to hold fast the belief that *with* Christ and *through* Christ we are to rejoice in his and our Father.

Yet he believed in a dynamic Christendom, or a Christendom resting upon the appearance of Christ. It is Christ who has transformed objective creed into subjective religion. He would say that Christ is in us, just as Paul is in us, but for the fact that Christ was sinless, and therefore furnished a perfect example of communion with God, while Paul's God-consciousness was perturbed by remaining sinfulness. Schleiermacher's critics have not failed to point out that he has not shown how Christ's sinless nature can be identical with ours, nor how the bringing of a clean thing out of an unclean can be a process of mere nature, nor how an immaculate Christ should be needed to explain the very faulty lives of Christians. Relative perfection in the church, they urge, does not argue absolute perfection in Christ, nor does an ideal necessarily imply a history. Ullmann has parted company with Schleiermacher here, and has constructed an elaborate argument for Christ's essential difference from mere humanity, his possession of a divine nature, and his supernatural birth—all based upon the fact of his sinlessness. The future perfection of the Christian demands not an *example*, but a *life* in Christ; not an *inciting*, but a *creative* power. Schleiermacher's religion demands more in his Christ—his philosophy demands less. To be logical, he should have given up Christ's sinlessness, or should have granted his supernatural origin. That he should have held to the sinlessness in spite of his naturalistic philosophy can be attributed only to the persistent influence of his Moravian training.

When we come to the doctrine of the atonement we find Schleiermacher denying any satisfaction to God by substitution. He puts in its place an influence of Christ's personality on men, so that they feel themselves reconciled and redeemed. The atonement is purely subjective, yet it is the work of Christ, in the sense that only Christ's sense of oneness with God has taught men that they can be one with God. Christ's consciousness of his being in God and of knowing God, and his power to impart this consciousness to others, make him a Mediator and Saviour. The idea of reparation, compensation, satisfaction, substitution, is wholly Jewish. He regards it as possible only to a narrow-minded people. He tells us that he hates in religion this kind of historic relations. He had no such sense of the holiness of God or of the guilt of man as would make necessary any suffering of punishment or offering to God for human sin. He desired to replace external and historical Christianity by a Christianity that was subjective and internal.

It is easy to see what views of regeneration, faith, and justification must follow. Justification is never separated, and as scarcely distinguished, from inward renewal. It is only the awakening of the God-consciousness—the believer's seeing God in Christ—God's seeing the believer in Christ makes no part of it. Faith is not Hegel's apprehension of the intellect, nor Kant's act of the will, but rather a feeling of the heart. And although Schleiermacher attributed this faith to a divine activity as its cause, this divine activity is not the coming in of an influence from without, as theologians have commonly understood regeneration to be —it is rather the product of human nature at its highest point of development. But human nature is inwardly and divinely moved. All its belief in God and communion with God is the welling up within of a divine life. Its new feeling toward God is only the reflex of God's feeling toward it, or rather is an initial participation in the divine feeling. When we work out our own salvation, our working is not the *result* of God's working—it is *itself* God's working in us, both to will and to work of his good pleasure.

Schleiermacher was a Reformed rather than a Lutheran theologian. He held, indeed, that election and foreknowledge are only different ways of viewing the same thing, and in this he agreed with the statement of Spinoza, that, in God, decree is the same as knowledge. But, since our fundamental conception of God is that of causality, he regarded election as logically prior to foreknowledge. Yet it would be a hasty judgment to call him a Calvinist. While in one respect he seems to accept the central principle of Calvinism, in another he swings so far to the opposite extreme as to leave Lutheranism far behind. While the Lutheran Church holds that election is God's decree to provide salvation for universal humanity, and that individual appropriation of that salvation is not the subject of that decree, Schleiermacher held with Calvin that election is individual, but is only an election to earlier conversion. All men at last are to come into God's kingdom. Thus Calvinism and Restorationism go hand in hand.

Schleiermacher has been called the prince of mediators. He aimed to reconcile antitheses not by the rejection of either one of the seemingly opposing views, but by discovering the deeper truth which underlies them and which each is seeking partially to represent. He tried to reconcile science and religion, religion and philosophy, philosophy and theology. But he also strove earnestly to reconcile the two great churches which divided Protestant Germany between them, and the union of Lutheran and Reformed in one Evangelical Church, in the year 1817, was largely the fruit of his labors. For the time in which he lived, his conceptions of the church were singularly liberal. While he regarded the invisible church as undivided and wholly conformed to truth, he claimed that the visible church is divided and partly in error. For this reason he was charitable to all faiths. He never abused the Roman Catholics, and they showed their appreciation by attending his funeral. In his "Discourses" he declared that nothing is more unchristian than to seek uniformity in religion, and with reference to the union between Church and State, he exclaimed: "Away with every such union! thus, like Cato, will I give my judgment even to the end, or till I live to see the union shattered to fragments."

In his later years he modified his views and gave up the idea of an invisible church altogether, maintaining that an invisible church is not a church, and that a church is not invisible. But he held always to the Protestant principle that the relation of the individual to the church depends upon, follows, and expresses his relation to Christ, in distinction from the Romanist view that his relation to Christ depends upon his relation to the church. The baptism of the infant he considered of no use to the infant, though it might be useful as a symbol to the church. He resented all governmental attempts to regulate purely ecclesiastical concerns. Though he was a patriot, and his words had a mighty influence in unifying the Prussian people in their opposition to Napoleon, he was no absolutist, and his liberalism cost him the favor of the king, and at one time endangered the tenure of his professorship. But the storm blew over, and his independence won for him public confidence and reverence in Germany, such as had been given to no preacher and teacher since the days of Luther.

In eschatology, more than in any other portion of Christian doctrine, we see Schleiermacher carrying his philosophy to its rigorous logical conclusions, in almost complete disregard of personal wishes and of common interpretations of Scripture. He regarded all pictures of a future life as various ways of representing an ideal which the church is progressively to realize. Christ's second advent, the resurrection, the judgment, heaven and hell, are all representations of present and continuous realities. They are to be taken not literally, but spiritually; they are not outward, but inward. The endless persistence of the individual seemed to him to involve insuperable difficulties. Continued development and perfect rest were to him speculatively incompatible. God-consciousness did not imply personal immortality. Humility might preserve the purest morality, while recognizing the limitations of the individual life and giving up the hope of continued existence beyond the grave. Stoicism, mysticism, and pantheism are strangely mixed in such utterances as these:

> Belief in immortality is irreligious rather than religious. It betrays a cleaving to the finite. . . He fools himself who makes a difference between this and another world. All who have religion know but one. . . In the midst of finiteness to be one with the Infinite, and to be eternal at every moment, this is the immortality of true religion.

His faith in the cessation of individual existence at death was sorely tried, first by the afflictions of his friends and then by his own afflictions. But he never comforted others, and he never comforted himself, with hopes of future reunion with the loved and lost. When Henrietta von Willich lost the husband of her youth, the ardent, thoughtful, spiritual preacher of the gospel, she poured out her soul to Schleiermacher in an agony of desire to get from him some word that might assure her that she and the departed would meet again:

> Schleier, shall I not find him again? Oh, my God, I implore you, by all that you love and hold sacred, if you can, give me the certainty that I shall find him again—that I shall recognize him! Tell me your innermost belief with regard to this, dear Schleier. Alas! it will be annihilation to me to lose this faith. In this I live; through this I bear with resignation and serenity; it is the only thing I look forward to, the only hope that sheds a faint glimmer of light on my darkened existence—to meet him again, to live again for him, to make him happy. O God! it is not possible; it cannot be destroyed; it is only interrupted. I can never again be happy without him. O Schleier, speak to my poor heart; tell me what you believe. . . When I think that his soul is dissolved, merged in the great All, that the past will not be recognized, that all is over —O Schleier! this I cannot bear. Oh, speak to me, dear, dear friend!

What could he say, who believed in no physical resurrection or continued personal existence, even of the Lord Jesus Christ? He could only speak, as the heathen spoke, of submission to an eternal order, of beautiful memories, of posthumous influence, of absorption in the universal life:

> Dear Jette, what can I say to you? Certainty beyond this life is not given to us. Do not misunderstand me. I mean certainty, instead of phantasy, which desires to see everything in distinct images. But, otherwise, there is the greatest certainty . . . that for the soul there is no such thing as death, no annihilation. But personal life is not the essence of spiritual being; it is but an outward presentment thereof. . . Your love desires to bear him in its heart, to preserve his memory ineffaceably, to have his image before you as a holy and lifelike presence; and that he thus lives on in you, and lives anew in your sweet children—let this be enough for you. . . But if your imagination suggest to you a merging in the great All, let not this, dear child, fill you with bitter, poignant anguish. Do not conceive of it as a lifeless, but as a living commingling—as the highest life. Is not the ideal toward which we are all striving even in this world, though we never reach it, the merging of the life of each in the life of all, and the putting away from us every semblance of a separate existence? If he lives in God, and you love him eternally in God, as you knew God and loved God in him, can you conceive of anything more glorious or more delightful? Is it not the highest goal that love can reach, compared with which every feeling that clings to the personal life and springs from that alone is as nothing? But if you picture to yourself a phenomenal life like the present—dear daughter, that is an empty phantom that you must try to get rid of.

It might almost seem as if Tennyson, in his " In Memoriam," had this correspondence in mind when he wrote:

> That each, who seems a separate whole,
> Should move his rounds, and fusing all
> The skirts of self again, should fall
> Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
  Eternal form shall still divide
  The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet;

And we shall sit at endless feast,
  Enjoying each the other's good.
  What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
  Before the spirits fade away,
  Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
"Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

But a sharper trial than this was in store for Schleiermacher. His only son, Nathanael, a gracious and promising child of nine years, and as one might say, the child of his old age, was taken from him by death. Of his birth the father said:

> With what joy and thankfulness I received him! My first prayer to God was that I might be inspired with wisdom and power from above to educate the child to his glory. Then of his training, he continues: Since the boy had begun to attend the gymnasium, I looked upon it as my special vocation to take him under my more particular guidance. Ultimately I had arranged it so that he studied in my room, and thus I may say that there was no hour in the day in which I did not think of the boy, and occupy myself with him, and now in consequence I miss him every hour. But there is nothing to be done but to resign myself, and to labor to transform the character of my grief. For struggle against it I will not and cannot, and give myself up to it I know I must not. On the day of his burial already I began to attend to all my duties as before, and life goes on in its old grooves, but more slowly and heavily.

So, though he declared that the loss "drove the nails into his own coffin," this deeply grieving man had yet the calm power of self-command to make the address at the grave of his child. That address exhibits so clearly both the warmth of his heart and the defects of his faith that I venture to quote from it somewhat at length:

> Dear friends, who have come hither to mourn with a father bowed at the grave of his beloved child, I know you have not come with the thought of seeing a reed that is shaken by the wind. What you find is an old trunk which simply does not break with the one blast that from a clear sky has suddenly stricken it. Yes, so it is. For a happy home protected and spared by heaven for twenty years, I have to thank God; for an official service accompanied for a far longer time by undeserved blessing; for a life full of joys and sorrows which I have lived in the fulfilment of my calling and in friendly sympathy with others. Many a heavy cloud has passed over my life, but faith has overcome that which came from without, and love has made good that which came from within. Now, however, this one blow, the first of its kind, has shattered my life to its very roots. Children, alas, are not only precious pledges entrusted to us by God, for which we have to give account; they are not only objects of endless care and duty, of love and prayer; they are also an immediate blessing to the house, they give as much as they receive, they freshen life, and they rejoice the heart. Such a blessing was this boy for our house. Yes, if the Redeemer says of these little ones that their angels do always behold the face of his Father, certainly in this child there appeared to us the kindness of our God, as if such an angel looked out of his eyes.

He goes on to tell of the prayer he had offered at the child's birth that fatherly love might never be permitted by excess and indulgence to work injury to the little one. He had named his son Nathanael with the prayer that, like his namesake in the Gospel, he might be without guile. It does not comfort him, he says, that the child has escaped the sorrows and temptations of this earthly life, for God would have kept him in spite of such. Nor is he comforted by hopes of future reunion:

> Many who sorrow draw comfort, I know, from a multiplicity of enticing pictures in which they represent to themselves a continuous communion of those who are left behind with those who have gone on before, and the more these pictures fill the soul the more all grieving over death is quieted. But to the man who has accustomed himself to rigor and acuteness of thinking, these pictures leave a thousand questions still unanswered, and they lose thereby very much of their power to console. I stand here then with my comfort and my hope resting solely upon the simple and yet the rich word of the Scripture: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear we shall see him as he is"; and upon that mighty prayer of our Lord: "I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." Supported then by this strong faith, and with a childlike submission I say from my heart: The Lord gave him to me, the name of the Lord be praised that he gave him to me, that he lent to this child a life which, though short, was glad and bright and warmed by the gracious breath of his love, that he has so faithfully watched and guided it, that no bitterness mingles with the preciousness of our recollections, but rather that we must confess that through the dear child we have been richly blessed. The Lord has taken him; his name be praised that, though he has taken him, he has left him to us still, and that he remains even here in inextinguishable memories as a precious and imperishable possession.

Then, after thanks to the mother for the tender care she had given to her son; to the older children for their love; to the friends for their sympathy; after acknowledgment that parental training is not perfect, and that something of self-reproach must mingle with the tears that are shed at the funeral of every child; and after gentle admonition to those who were present to live with those they loved as if they were soon to be separated from them, he concludes with this touching prayer:

> O thou God who art love, let me now not only submit myself to thine omnipotence and adapt myself to thine unsearchable wisdom, but also recognize thy fatherly love! Make even this heavy trial the means of new blessing in my calling! For me and for all mine may this common sorrow become a bond of closer affection, and through it may my whole family attain to a new reception of thy Spirit! Grant that even this time of mourning may bring a blessing to all who have gathered here! May we all ripen evermore to that wisdom which looks away from that which is vain and worthless, which in all that is earthly and transitory sees and loves only the eternal, and which in all thy decrees finds also thy peace and the eternal life into which by faith we enter through the gates of death. Amen.

The Christian spirit of this address and of its concluding prayer are as unmistakable as is the absence of that peculiar joy and hope which is the proper heritage of believers. He could not say with the apostle that for him " to die was gain," for to his wife he wrote, after an experience of his own bodily weakness:

> I could not sit down to write to you, because I was obliged to think of my sermon, which did not, however, turn out very well, because I was somewhat inattentive then, and partly because of a very strange paroxysm which came over me in the vestry previous to my going into the pulpit, and which I must relate to you. All of a sudden, I do not know by what concatenation of thought, such a dread took hold of me that I should be overcome by fear on the approach of death, that it actually brought on a kind of physical depression which must have had a perceptible influence on my sermon. You know I have repeatedly mentioned to you that I did not feel quite sure that I should not fear death when it came, but the thought never before overwhelmed me in that manner.

He wished to die in full possession of his powers, and this God granted him. In the early part of February, 1834, he was seized with his last illness. His physician announced the approach of death. Wife and children gathered near his bedside. He was calm and gentle, serious but uncomplaining. And the following are some of his last words:

> I am in a state between consciousness and unconsciousness, but inwardly I enjoy heavenly moments. I feel constrained to think the profoundest speculative thoughts, and they are to me identical with the deepest religious feelings. . . Here light a sacrificial flame. . . To the children I bequeath the saying from Saint John: "Love one another." . . I charge you to greet all my friends, and to tell them how sincerely I have loved them. . . I have never clung to the dead letter, and we have the atoning death of Jesus Christ, his body and his blood. Do you agree with me in this belief? . . Then let us take the communion!

Bread and wine were then brought in; an expression of heavenly rapture spread over his features; a strange luster shone in his eyes; a look of beaming love fell upon those present; and, after a few devout words of prayer, he began to administer the ordinance. He gave to each the bread, and last of all he himself partook of it. He gave to each the wine also, with Christ's words of institution: "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Then he said: "On these words of the Scripture I rely; they are the foundation of my faith." He pronounced the benediction, and added: "In this love and communion we are, and ever will remain, united." He sank back upon his pillow, the look of love and rapture still upon his face, and, while his children were still kneeling as they had received the elements of the Lord's Supper, his eyes closed, and Schleiermacher's earthly life was ended. Can we doubt that he who brought life and immortality out from obscurity into clear daylight by his gospel removed then the last scales from his eyes and admitted him into paradise?

Schleiermacher was a rationalist, in that he found his source of doctrine not in Scripture, but in man's nature; he was a supernaturalist, in that he regarded this nature of man as pervaded by the divine Spirit, and as being for that reason itself a revelation of God. As he strove with imperfect success to reconcile two seemingly opposite views of truth, it is not wonderful that subsequent German theology has divided into two schools, each of which emphasizes one side of his doctrine. Strauss and Baur, Biedermann, Lipsius, and Pfleiderer have been greatly influenced by Hegel, and have transformed Christian doctrine into a sort of idealistic philosophy. Ritschl, Harnack, Hermann, and Kaftan have followed Kant, and have given us a theology dominated by the principle of relativity. It must not be forgotten, however, that, apart from all these, there stands a third class of pious ministers and laymen, who are neither rationalists nor agnostics, but who perpetuate, because they have experienced, the simple gospel which Schleiermacher found among the Moravians, and which constituted, in spite of his philosophic aberrations, the inmost essence of his faith and the anchor of his soul.

In our day, with increasing knowledge of his writings, there is an increasing disposition to follow him, and there are not wanting those who would have us go back to Schleiermacher for mediation between conflicting tendencies in modern thought. Much of our recent theology, indeed, is but a repetition of ideas which with him were original and independent. We may grant that his recognition of God's immanence has furnished the key to many problems and has been of inestimable benefit to theology. But his denial of God's transcendence and personality is an error so vast and pernicious as well-nigh to neutralize the effect of the truth he proclaims. Like King Procrustes, he cut short the truth in order to make it fit the bed of his pantheistic philosophy. Because he held unwaveringly to the reality of a divine life in the soul, God used him to deliver Germany from the rationalistic slough into which it had fallen and to point the way to a sounder faith. But in most respects he is a poor guide to follow. Charles Hodge has well said that Schleiermacher is like a ladder in a pit—a good thing for those who wish to get out, but a bad thing for those who wish to get in.

The Christocentric element in Schleiermacher, next to his advocacy of the immanence of God, is the most important element in the theologian, the preacher, and the man. He recognized that in man's sinfulness and impotence the revelation of God in Christ is the only means of redemption. As to Christ's person and work he fell into many and grievous errors, yet he never ceased to confess his absolute dependence upon him for salvation. He could never escape from the influence of Herrnhut. "The Moravian Brotherhood," says Dorner, "was his mother, though Greece was his nurse." It shows us how powerful God can make even a fragment of his truth, when we see this man creating a new epoch in Germany, and bringing theology back to Christ and the Christian faith. He came forth from the dead church of Germany like Lazarus from the tomb; the grave-clothes of a pantheistic philosophy entangled his steps; yet the spectacle of a man raised from the death of unbelief and sin, and full of the life of God, drew men's thoughts to Christ, the worker of the miracle. Christ guided him, though he did not fully know Christ. Of Schleiermacher more than of most reformers it may be said:

> Himself from God he could not free;
> He builded better than he knew.

XXVI

EZEKIEL GILMAN ROBINSON AS A THEOLOGIAN[1]

In attempting a sketch of Doctor Robinson's theology, I find myself unable to dissociate the doctrine from the preacher, the administrator, and the man. To him as my teacher and predecessor I owe more than I owe to any one else outside of my own family circle. And since this indebtedness must color all my judgments, it will be best to state frankly, at the start, what the debt was; the reader can then make what allowance he chooses for the personal equation.

Some of my earliest impulses to preach were determined by Doctor Robinson's magnificent bearing in the pulpit when, as a boy, I listened to him in the early years of his work at Rochester. He dealt with great themes, yet he was a master of extemporaneous speech. His lucid, intense, and thoughtful utterance, exact in expression, yet always simply and severely natural, keyed ordinarily to a high intellectual pitch, but tremulous at times with emotion, revolutionized all my ideas of oratory, and I desired to be a minister of the gospel that I might be a public teacher. When I left college, and had to choose a place of seminary training, it seemed to me that no one but Doctor Robinson could teach me how to preach. I began my course full of literature and history, but with small thought of the greater problems of existence. In his classroom I found my intellectual awakening. His searching questions, and the discussions that followed, roused my thinking powers as nothing ever had before. It became the pursuit of a lifetime to know the truth.

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[1] Contributed as a chapter in "Ezekiel Gilman Robinson: An Autobiography," published by Silver, Burdett & Co.

Of dogmatic instruction in theology, in those years 1857-1859, there was little. His brief dictations constituted not so much a system as a series of suggestions to stimulate inquiry. Our teacher appeared to be feeling his way along, and his great anxiety seemed to be that each of his pupils should feel his own way. Nothing vexed him more than a lazy repetition of traditional formulæ. He often challenged even a correct statement, in order to see whether the utterer understood what he was saying. Aside from the magnetic, inspiring, and transforming influence of his own personality, the greatest service he rendered us was that he taught us to think for ourselves.

As a theologian, he was at this time critical rather than constructive. He represented the tendencies of Brown and Newton, rather than those of Hamilton, from which his predecessor, Doctor Maginnis, had come. Doctor Maginnis, our teacher of theology during the first two years of the seminary's existence, was a Princeton theologian of the straitest sect. But Doctor Robinson at Brown University had been under the influence of President Wayland, who was partly educated at Andover, and was a great admirer of Professor Stuart. At Newton Theological Institution Doctor Robinson had been instructed by Dr. Irah Chase and Dr. Barnas Sears. Doctor Chase taught a theology so unlike that of Princeton that some of our extremely orthodox ministers refused to put their sons under what they regarded as heterodox teaching. Doctor Sears taught but little positive doctrine of any kind. His method was to suggest questions rather than to answer them. Scholarship and discussion were the main features of his classroom. No one of these teachers of Doctor Robinson had been strongly conservative. All had been men noted for independence as well as for thinking power.

Doctor Robinson began his theological teaching in a place where the traditions, though brief, were in favor of an old-fashioned theology. New England thinking was regarded as a sort of free-thinking. Doctor Shedd's realistic interpretations of the old orthodoxy were not yet widely known, even if they had been published. Princeton still claimed to represent the immemorial faith of the church of God. There were elements of the Old School doctrine which Doctor Robinson cherished as his very life. Neither Andover nor New Haven ever made a convert of him. He even seems to have tried, at the first, to use the traditional formulæ of the theology of the Covenants. But it is clear to me that he felt the arbitrariness and externalism of the Princeton system, even though he had not shaken himself wholly loose from it. The lectures which he dictated at this time are cautious statements of the dominant orthodoxy, with its more mechanical features greatly softened down, and with the accompanying suggestion of new points of view which logically imply another and a better faith.

We must remember that he always taught homiletics side by side with theology, and that he deeply felt the responsibility of instructing men who were to repeat his views to all the world with an emphasis and exaggeration of their own. Therefore he made haste slowly. He was no iconoclast. He never intended to break with the old. He regarded theological terms as largely metaphorical, and his aim was to discover the substance that underlay them. He could have subscribed to John Bunyan's couplet:

> My dark and cloudy words, they do but hold
> The truth, as cabinets encase the gold.

He criticized with great severity the legal fictions of the Princeton school, but he had the deepest reverence for the reality which they sought so unfortunately to express. In fact, I regard the passionate bent toward reality as the central characteristic of his intellectual life. Shows and forms he had small sympathy with. He would get at the inner being. He censured all theologizing that did not go to the heart of the matter. He disdained all conduct that savored of pretense. When he spoke, he would say nothing, or he would say the truth. The truth, as he at the time conceived it, was often biting and galling to those whose views he antagonized. But Doctor Robinson did not spare on that account. Like Stein, the great German, he was proud toward man, but humble toward God.

From 1853 to 1872 he was professor of Biblical Theology in the Rochester Theological Seminary, and from 1868 to 1872 he was its president. During all the years of his professorship, as well as of his presidency, he was the one man who gave name and fame to the institution, and the one man who drew to it students and endowments. Doctors Conant and Hotchkiss and Northrup and Kendrick and Hackett and Rauschenbusch and Buckland were, in those early days, most able coadjutors, and their services were very great. But it is still true that to Doctor Robinson the institution at Rochester owes more of its character and success than to any other single man. The seminary, which at the beginning of his administration in 1853 was absolutely destitute of property or endowments, had, in 1872, resources amounting to $224,000. This increase represents an amount of personal and skilful work on the part of one man which would simply challenge admiration, if it were not so pathetic and incongruous an expenditure of energy. That a thinker and teacher of such mark should have been compelled to turn aside from his proper work in order to solicit rich men's gifts, and to make his own living, not by his week-day instruction, but by his Sunday preaching, is pitiful enough. Yet such are the toils and trials that have gone to the founding of all our great educational institutions.

The institution prospered—prospered so much that Brown University coveted its president, and at last succeeded in drawing him away to another sphere of labor. But this prosperity was purchased at a price. Doctor Robinson had not the time nor the strength which he ought to have had for the maturing and the publishing of his theological system. He was not a ready writer, and systematizing with him was a slow work. His critical faculty was always asserting itself, and was hindering the work of positive construction. But before his teaching at Rochester ended, his views had to a considerable extent crystallized, and he had proceeded a long way in the elaboration of his "Christian Theology." Three hundred and twenty pages of it were actually printed. He reached the subject of Regeneration; but there the work stopped. His new duties at Brown absorbed him, and theology was never taken up again. The loose sheets, with the exception of a few which fell into the hands of favored friends, have been boxed up for these twenty-two years. And so the work remains, like Aladdin's palace-hall, with only a window to add, but with no one to finish it.[2]

When I began my own work, as Doctor Robinson's successor, I deeply felt the overmastering influence of his teaching. I knew that my ways of theological thinking had been largely shaped by him. I feared, if I made use of his recently printed notes, that I should become a copyist. I resolved, therefore, to construct my own sytem *de novo,* without once looking at what my former teacher had written. In fact, the pages of his work have only, within a few months, been in my hands for careful scrutiny.

Two things I desire to say with regard to the impressions which the reading has made upon me. First, I have a new reverence for the general weight and correctness of Doctor Robinson's theological teaching. Here is a noble body of doctrine, grand in its leading conception, wrought out with singular originality, and in most of its lines true to Scripture. The quarter of a century which has passed since he began to print it has brought some new truths into prominence; if he could now write it over again, he would, doubtless, qualify some of his statements and make others clearer; yet it is still true that the work is even now one of great significance, and sure, if published, to attract the attention and respect of the theological world. Secondly, I am humbled to find how much of my own thinking that I thought original has been an unconscious reproduction of his own. Words and phrases which I must have heard from him in the classroom thirty-five years ago, and which have come to be a part of my mental furniture, I now recognize as not my own, but his. And the ruling idea of his system—that stands out as the ruling idea of mine; I did not realize until now that I owed it almost wholly to him.

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[2] Since this article was written, the "Christian Theology" of Doctor Robinson, the latter part copied from the notebooks of former students, has been published by the E. R. Andrews Printing Company, Rochester, N. Y., 1904.

Jean Paul says, beautifully, of the obscure teachers of village schools, that they fall from notice like the spring blossoms, but they fall that the fruit may be born. Doctor Robinson's self-effacing way of pouring his own mind and will into his pupils, rather than of putting himself into printed books, has lessened his fame, but it has brought forth abundant fruit. Through hundreds of the foremost men of our Baptist denomination, he has been preaching truth and righteousness for forty years. I wish to be one of the first to put the praise where it belongs, and to say that the impulse to clear and manly utterance in the pulpit, the love of exact statement, the disposition to preach truth rather than tradition, which have of late years transformed our Baptist pulpit and brought it abreast of our advancing age, have been chiefly due, under God, to the teaching and the example of Doctor Robinson.

I have said that the passionate bent toward reality was the central characteristic of his intellectual life. He believed in reality because he believed in God. Yet many of his struggles and difficulties originated in a philosophy which obscured the testimony of our nature to God's existence and attributes. He had been greatly influenced by the reading of Kant. Hamilton and Mansel, who reproduced a part of Kant's doctrine, strongly attracted him. The relativity of knowledge perpetually discounted the things of faith. It is interesting to see how Doctor Robinson, while greatly influenced by this philosophy, made his way, notwithstanding, through it, and in spite of it, to essential truth both with regard to God and with regard to God's revelation. He was one of the first in this country to subject the common arguments for the existence of God to a careful criticism, after the Kantian fashion. Here, as well as elsewhere, he was the sworn foe to overstatement in doctrine,—indeed, he preferred to err on the side of doubt rather than on the side of dogmatism. Rational minds, he would say, cannot observe their own laws of thought in the contemplation of cosmical phenomena without believing in a primal and personal Force, lying behind all, and originating the universal whole. The world abounds in adaptations to ends; therefore the world must have been purposed; or, in other words, there is a personal Intelligence by whom it has been fashioned. Man, with his aspirations and cravings, can find an ideal only in God, while the moral distinctions which man is forced to make give unmistakable testimony to the existence of One who is at once man's Author and his ultimate Standard of right and wrong.

Although I do not find anywhere, in Doctor Robinson's chapter on God's existence, the phrase "immanent finality," I do find such an avoidance of the old "carpenter-phraseology" as to suggest that he viewed God's relation to the universe as not mechanical, but organic. Yet while man, conscious of causality, intelligence, and responsibility in himself, is reminded, as he looks out into the universe, of a supreme and universal Cause, Intelligence, and Judge, no one of all the arguments can be said to be a demonstration. "The evidence of the Divine existence is not so much logical as moral; it is adjusted rather to the eye of the soul than to the logical faculty; if the eye be darkened, God is not seen in any evidence of his being." It is to man's moral consciousness, then, rather than to argument, that Doctor Robinson would appeal, while he still regards the arguments for God's existence as valuable means of stimulating this consciousness, and of calling attention to the revelations which God has made of himself.

There is a striking similarity between our author's method in speaking of inspiration, and his method in speaking of the existence of God. He treats God's revelation in his word just as he treats God's revelation in nature. As it is not the fragments and petty details of the universe that reveal the designing Mind, so in the Bible, the argument for inspiration is drawn from the book as a whole rather than from its separate parts.

To inspire, he would say, was not necessarily to educate. The whole early church was inspired, and the office of the Spirit in inspiration was not different from that which he performed for many ordinary Christians at the time when the New Testament was written. Inspiration was consistent with imperfect ideas in the minds of the Scripture writers, and the literary, logical, scientific, and historical defects which modern investigation has made apparent are only indications of a human element which the divine pressed into its service, or in spite of which the truth was progressively unfolded. The higher criticism had not become rife when Doctor Robinson constructed his system; but the principle and spirit of it, so far as it is theistic and reverent, are Doctor Robinson's own, and his whole conception of inspiration is surprisingly like that which has of late become so current. He did not regard the imprecations of the Psalms, for example, as inspired by God. Only the divine purposes and ideas were inspired, and the imprecations were but the drapery or the vehicle by which those purposes and ideas were necessarily interpreted to early times. As David's adultery was not commanded by God, yet was made the means of the descent of Christ, so human error was sometimes made the means of introducing into the world the revelation of the perfect God.

Yet Doctor Robinson declares the Christian religion " to be, in comparison with all other religions, in an exclusive sense, revealed," and its records were " made by men who were guided, as no other writers ever were, by an omniscient Spirit." He discards all theories of inspiration, and " declines any attempt to state by what method the Spirit must have fulfilled the divine will in the writing of the Scriptures." Each of the Scripture penmen, indeed, received and communicated the truth in his own way, and with such mingling of the human element with the divine that it is impossible to distinguish between the word of God and the Scriptures through which that word has come to us. "The Bible can be properly understood only as a whole, as an organic growth of many centuries, all of which is necessary to be taken into account if we would see the consistency of its parts, the one with another; and though the writings of each age, Mosaic, Prophetic, and Christian, are now requisite to the completeness and intelligibility of Scripture as a whole, yet to each age its own revelations and writings, conjoined with all that had preceded, must have been absolutely authoritative, because it was as complete and explicit a revelation of the divine Mind as then was possible."

This view of the organic unity of Scripture, and the doctrine that Scripture, only as a whole, represents absolute truth, were views not common when Doctor Robinson began to teach. The clear statement of them, indeed, was wrought out only toward the close of his theological career. But the substance of them had lain long in his mind, and even his earliest students can remember the impatience with which he regarded the quotation of an isolated verse, as if it were a proof-text apart from its context and its historical setting. Hence he supplemented all other biblical arguments by "the analogy of faith." For the Bible, as a whole, he had profound reverence. Though he did not assert that it was inerrant in unimportant matters of historical and scientific detail, he did believe it to be a complete and sufficient rule of faith and practice. Yet he did not deny that infinite wisdom has provided many helps to the study of the Scriptures. History, science, philosophy could even be called "collateral sources of theology." By this he meant that physical nature and human nature are themselves revelations of God, and that from them we are to learn all we can, though the "one direct and controlling source to which the decisive appeal must always be made is the sacred Scriptures."

The attributes of God were defined by Doctor Robinson as "our methods of conceiving of him." Here I think he yielded too much to the Kantian and Hamiltonian relativity, and made it possible to regard the attributes as existing only in our subjective thought. But the further development of the subject makes it plain that he did not intend to be so interpreted. "Any argumentation," he says, "which will show that our conceptions of God can only be relatively true to us, and not positively true in themselves, will equally avail to overthrow the trustworthiness of all our knowledge, and can end only in universal skepticism. Our conceptions are inadequate, but not, therefore, untrue; they are limited because we are finite, but not, therefore, contradictory or false." This is sound and true. How, then, shall we interpret such *dicta* as the following: "The attributes do not represent distinguishable properties in the divine essence. . . To suppose that we treat of essence when we treat of attributes is to confound God with our conceptions of him." I can answer my own question only by saying that Doctor Robinson was hampered here by a wrong philosophy. To him, as to Kant, the essence was always "the thing in itself," and could not be known. A more modern and more correct philosophy admits no such element of inherent and eternal agnosticism. Though essence can be known only through attributes, it is still true that, in knowing attributes, we know essence. Surely God is not concealed by his very manifestation. The reason why we cannot perfectly know God is that we cannot perfectly know his attributes, not that knowledge of attributes does not involve knowledge of essence. We do not fully know God's attributes because he has not fully revealed them, and because we are not great enough to understand them. But we do know them in part, and in just so far we know God. As in knowing phenomena we know the object, so in knowing God's attributes we partially know God himself. Attributes, therefore, should be defined, not as our conceptions of God, but rather as those objective characteristics of the divine Being which are necessary to the idea of God, and which constitute the basis and ground for his various manifestations to his creatures.

The slightly agnostic element to which I have alluded combined with Doctor Robinson's critical faculty to tone down his statements and to make them severely self-restrained. All the more strong and convincing were his teachings on matters where he had made discoveries or had invented new methods. We must give to him the credit for a new classification of the divine attributes according to the order of the relations that make them known; first, attributes related to space and time, as immensity and eternity; secondly, attributes related to the material universe, as omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence; thirdly, attributes related to moral creatures, as holiness, truth, love. But it is especially in his recognition of holiness, as the fundamental and supreme attribute, that I find his greatest originality and his greatest service to the theology of our time. When we remember how the New England theology was exalting benevolence, or the love of being in general, to the supreme place, and, by making holiness a means to an end, was denying to it any independent existence in the divine nature; when we remember how even Old School theologians defined holiness as the mere aggregate of the divine perfections, and so deprived it of any distinct significance—we can appreciate the originality and the grandeur of Doctor Robinson's view, when he declared that " holiness should be our fundamental conception," and that " from it every other moral attribute may be synthetized or logically deduced."

Our materialistic and easy-going age has drifted even farther from the truth than it was a quarter of a century ago. Doctor Robinson foresaw the consequences to theology and to morals of a virtually utilitarian philosophy, and he laid the foundation of his system in the ethical being of God. What conscience declares to be highest in us must be highest in God. " Justice does not exist for certain *ends;* it is the expression of eternal right; it is the inexorable demand of related moral natures. Accompanying benefits reveal neither the grounds of its existence nor the qualities of its nature." Instead of holiness being a form of love, it is far more true that love is a form of holiness, "A pure being seeks the purity of others, and in so doing shows his mercy. Benevolence is only a generic and more comprehensive conception than mercy." This view of holiness as the fundamental attribute of God prepares the way for what was probably the most impressive and inspiring part of his teaching; I mean his idea of law as the expression of God's holiness, or the transcript of the moral nature of God. No man who sat under Doctor Robinson's instruction can ever forget the scorn with which he treated the vulgar notion of law as something devised or invented, a makeshift to meet an exigency, an arbitrary enactment for the good of the creature, founded in mere will, unmade as easily as made, suspended or abrogated by fiat even as mere fiat had given it birth. Nor can any student of his forget his sublime and perpetual insistence on moral law as the eternal and unchangeable expression of the nature of God and the relations between God and his creatures—an expression so eternal and unchangeable that God himself cannot change his law without ceasing to be God.

By these conceptions of holiness and law Doctor Robinson defined his position as an Old School man, and made it impossible that he should have any other than an Old School view of sin. For, observe that this law, which is itself the transcript of the divine holiness, is simply the demand in the nature of things that the creature within the limits of its own being should be morally like its Creator. Law requires conformity to God, therefore, not only in act and in disposition, but in the very state and substance of the soul. All lack of conformity to God is sin. Guilt is the obligation to suffer for such lack, and penalty is the natural reaction of the violated law. Is man unlike God in act, disposition, or state? Then, however, he came into this condition, he is sinful, guilty, punishable. All men by nature, and from their first father down, are in this state of sin and guilt and punishment, and can be delivered from it, not by any effort or merit of their own, but solely by the grace and power of God in Jesus Christ. If we speak of Doctor Robinson's soteriology, we might find something to criticize; but in our judgment his doctrine of holiness, law, and sin is worthy of all praise.

I have put these three things—holiness, law, and sin—together, although they are ordinarily separated in a theological system, and I have put them together in order to show conclusively that our author, in spite of peculiar views with regard to the method and the application of the atonement, cherished such conceptions as logically necessitated the deity and the propitiatory sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. But before describing his opinions on these later points, it will be necessary to go back to his view of creation, preservation, and providence. Here we have another illustration of his refusal to dogmatize where he regarded Scripture as teaching nothing decisive, and of his earnest effort to reach reality beneath the forms of traditional statement. To his mind it was an open question whether the Scriptures teach the absolute *origination* of matter. The Hebrew word *bara* did not seem to him to settle the question. Yet he recognized in the organic *forms* of matter the embodied thought of a creative Will. "Even spontaneous generation does not preclude the idea of such a creative Will, working by natural law and secondary causes. Of beginnings of life, physical science knows nothing. Of the processes of nature it is competent to speak, and against its teachings there is no need that theology should set itself in hostility."

I do not know how much of an attraction the idealistic interpretation of the universe had for Doctor Robinson. The mention of secondary causes above, and his declaration in another place that space must have existed before the universe, would seem to show that he sought no relief from the problem of creation in the thought that matter, as ideal, may also be eternal. But, in treating of preservation and providence, he seems to verge toward the idealistic explanation. Though he denies that law is simply uniform divine action, he also denies the so-called *concursus* of God with finite causes. Though he declares that "God's relation to the material universe is unknown and unknowable," he also declares that "matter and physical force are indissolubly one," that "all forces are modes of one force," and that "this force is personal force." "The natural is God's work. He originated it. There is no separateness between the natural and the supernatural. The natural *is* supernatural. God works in everything. Every end, even though attained by mechanical means, is as truly God's end as if wrought by miracle." Here the more modern conception of the universe seems to be working in Doctor Robinson's mind, and to be coloring his thought. His readiness to recognize the working of God both in nature and in man, and his unreadiness to postulate a *Deus ex machina* where the " Spirit within the wheels " would account for all the facts, seem like an unconscious anticipation of the thought of God's immanence, which is so transforming the theology of our generation.

The definition of miracle as a " special sign from God, authenticating the claim of one of his messengers," is confessedly intended to exclude all dogmatizing with regard to the relation of the miracle to natural law and to second causes. If the signality of the miracle be maintained, then it matters not, even if natural law itself be the perpetual working of God. Mere outward wonder cannot certify to a divine commission, unless the teaching and the life of the worker commend themselves to the moral consciousness. The resurrection of our Lord, as a witness to Christianity, depends as much on the existence of the church, as the church rests for its foundation upon the resurrection of our Lord. The living church is the burning bush that is not consumed. The church has the word " resurrection " written all over it. Its very existence is proof of the resurrection. Twelve men could never have founded the church if Christ had remained in the tomb. Doctor Robinson would defend miracles, then, but he would not rest the whole weight of Christianity upon them. " No amount of miracle could convince a good man of the divine commission of a known bad man; nor, on the other hand, could any degree of miraculous power suffice to silence the doubts of an evil-minded man." " The miracle is a certification only to him who can perceive its significancy."

As miracle involves no violation or suspension of natural law, so the ordinary providential government of God is conducted in such a way as to give full range to human freedom. Man's will as well as God's will can effect results without producing any jar in the system. I could wish that, in his treatment of the will, Doctor Robinson had more definitely set himself against determinism. He seems rather to intimate that Jonathan Edwards' argument has never been satisfactorily answered. The highest conceivable freedom, he says, is to act out one's nature. The will is the nature in movement. Will is self-determining, indeed; but this means, not that the will determines the self, but that the self determines the will. Observation and logic lead to necessitarianism. We have no consciousness of a power of contrary choice, for consciousness testifies only to what springs out of the moral nature, not to what the moral nature itself is. Yet consciousness testifies, in some sense, to freedom. Single volitions are often directly in the face of the current of a man's life. The will cannot be compelled; for, unless self-determined, it is no longer will. The consciousness of freedom must be trusted, even though we cannot reconcile it with our logic. So Doctor Robinson does not decide the philosophical question, though it is plain that his leanings are toward determinism. He declares that the will is as great a mystery as is the doctrine of the Trinity. As we do not know the nature of the human will, so we do not know the connection between human volitions and the divine will. But we do know, he says—and this I regard as a most valuable and reassuring statement—we do know that "the absolute certainty of events, which is all that Omniscience determines with regard to them, is not identical with their necessitation."

So the doctrine of Providence is connected with the doctrine of Decrees. "To the omniscient Mind, in which there is no succession, no events are contingent. Causes, with their conditions and effects, are alike and always known as indissolubly one. God's knowledge and purposes both being eternal, one cannot be conceived as the ground of the other, nor can either be predicted to the exclusion of the other as the cause of things; but, correlative and eternal, they must be co-equal quantities in thought." It might possibly occur to an objector to say that when God knows what he will do, his willing is the ground of his knowing, instead of his knowing being the ground of his willing. This is practically granted in other parts of the system, as, for example, where it is suggested that answers to prayer are consistent with the immutability of natural law, because the immutability of natural law has its only explanation and ground in the decrees of God; or where, under the head of Calling and Election, he declares that "in becoming Christians, men are moved, controlled, and transformed by a power of Will superior to their own, and that in transforming them the divine Will simply executes its eternal purpose." He justly prefers the scriptural doctrine to that of the Positivists, who "disdain decree, but consign us to the iron necessity of physical forces," and to that of Pelagians or Arminians, whose system is "necessarily one-sided, and ministers ruinously to the pride of man."

But we must hasten to Doctor Robinson's anthropology. Here he diverged from the traditional view of man's original state, by teaching that the image of God in the first man did not imply moral perfection, but only the possession of those higher powers which distinguish man from the brute. "Christ," he says, "proposes to carry forward human nature to a higher point, not simply to restore what was lost." The phrase "very good," which is used to describe man's first condition, "does not imply moral perfection." Such perfection cannot be the result of creation, but must be attained through discipline and will. Man's original state was only one of untried innocence. I have no doubt that the old orthodoxy, which Doctor Robinson was here opposing, unduly magnified the powers and virtues of the first father of our race. When Doctor South declared that "Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam," he went far beyond Scripture. But it seems to me that Doctor Robinson went to quite the opposite extreme when he made the image of God consist in mere personality, and denied to the first man any, even a germinal, holiness of character. If, when God newly creates the soul in Christ, he gives a germinal "righteousness and holiness of truth," then in the original creation he could also impart a tendency toward the good and a love for himself. To deny this is to imply the whole Roman Catholic doctrine that man, being created destitute of moral character, attains to holiness and earns God's favor by his own obedience.

There are two reasons, however, why I must decline to attribute this Roman Catholic doctrine to Doctor

Robinson, and must regard him as protesting against an ultra-Protestant exaggeration of man's original excellence rather than against the substance of the Protestant view. One reason is that he grants man's possession, by creation, of "right spontaneities" or "a constitutional predisposition toward a course of right conduct"; and the other is that, in his own doctrine of regeneration, he so freely concedes that the original impulse and love of righteousness must come from God. So he appears to grant to the first man right *tendencies*, but to deny to the first man right *character*. At the same time, I could wish for a stronger affirmation than he has given us of man's original moral likeness to God. He describes him as "immature and untried at the outset, and consequently, at the best, only sinless." "His civil and social condition must have been of the humblest," he says. "But on the other hand, the supposition of an original savage condition, but little if any removed from the level of the more intelligent brutes, is a mere conjecture, unsupported by any decisive evidence, besides being wholly contrary to the Scriptures." One may question, however, whether the scriptural argument against man's descent from the brute would have seemed to him so conclusive, if this chapter had been written a quarter of a century later, when the Darwinian theory is so generally accepted, and when evolution is regarded by so many theologians as the method of creation pursued by the immanent God.

It is easy to see that whatever view is taken of man's original state must profoundly affect one's view of man's fall. Doctor Robinson did not grant to man at the beginning any great height of virtue, even if he could be said to have virtue at all. But man was sinless; his state was one of innocence; he was "endowed with free will"; he "could have resisted temptation and could have moved ever onward in normal development. Uninfluenced from without, he might, or rather, so far as any analysis of his actions for us is possible, he must, have remained an unfallen being." And our author goes on most admirably to say: "How, even under temptation, he could have so willed against his nature as by volition to have changed the nature itself, is absolutely inconceivable. But that he was capable of such volition, and by its exercise fell from his original sinlessness, is plainly taught in the Scriptures, and the reproaches of the individual conscience for personal obliquities, even amid the darkness and ruin of the fall, seem to be conclusive evidence of the same great fact." So Doctor Robinson transferred the whole blame of sin from God to man. And not only to the first man, but to all men; for "whatever befell the progenitors of the race, their descendants have inherited. By the fall there was lost an original righteousness"—here I call attention to the fact that our author had not entirely given up the idea of some positive tendencies to good in our first parents—"by the fall there was lost an original righteousness, which, but for its loss, would have been the birthright of every one of the race, and in its stead there were incurred certain positive evils which to every one have been a heritage of woe."

Doctor Robinson's doctrine of original sin cannot be understood without remembering that all lack of conformity to God is sin, and that no proper distinction can be drawn between penalty and consequences. "The distinction between penalty and consequences," he says, "between guilt and liability, so much insisted on in modern theology, can be maintained only by limiting our knowledge of moral law to the mere statutes of the Bible; by restricting human guilt to the violation of those statutes; and by so distinguishing between Nature and Revelation as most unwarrantably to separate them. But if God be the author of the constitution and course of Nature, if the office of the formal revelation of the Bible be to supplement and to supplant the earlier revelation of Nature, then all painful consequences of wrong acts must be as distinctly penal as if they had been formally threatened." Thus light is thrown back upon holiness, law, and sin: these are regarded as constitutional, not as matters of outward expediency or enactment. As all men, in consequence of the fall, lack the holiness which the law requires, they are sinners; as this lack is the fault of their common humanity, they are guilty; as it brings upon them pain and loss, they are under penalty and condemnation.

A definition of sin which covers all the facts of the case has always been a great desideratum. To say that sin consists in sinning is to confine attention to its most superficial aspect, while its deadly force is altogether ignored. Doctor Robinson has probably given us the most comprehensive and exact definition of sin that can be found in theological literature—namely, "As an act, sin is a transgression of God's law; as a principle that determines the guilt of acts, it is opposition or hostility to God; as a state or nature, it is moral unlikeness to God." He had no difficulty in concluding that the essence of sin, that in it which makes it to be sin, is neither sensuousness nor unbelief, but selfishness, or an inordinate self-love and self-seeking. "A certain degree of self-love is allowable. . . But all love, to self or others, is legitimate only as it is subordinate to, and purified by, an intelligent and all-inclusive love to the common Father of all. All love becomes sinful, selfish, idolatrous, in proportion as its object is isolated from God. . . Unselfishness is the soul of virtue, and selfishness is the vitalizing principle of every vice and of every variety of sin." Sin, then, in a true sense, is itself death, since it is the soul's voluntary withdrawal from God, the source of life and purity. While Doctor Robinson did not deny that physical death, or the separation of the soul from the body, is a consequence of Adam's sin, he held that spiritual death, or the separation of the soul from God, is sin's chief penalty. With separation of the soul from God, moreover, there has ensued a disintegration of man's own spiritual being. The real freedom of the will, which consists in the harmonious working of all the faculties, has been lost, and only that formal freedom which is a necessary condition of rational existence now remains.

As to the common guilt of the human race, Doctor Robinson was a believer in mediate imputation. Since his theology dealt primarily with conditions and not with edicts, he grounded the condemnation of the race not so much upon a common act of the race in Adam, as upon the more palpable fact of universal and congenital depravity. It is only through each man's depravity that we can impute to him guilt. Here, as it seems to me, our author diverged from the teaching of Scripture, became inconsistent with himself, and adopted a principle which burdened him greatly when he came to explain Christ's taking our penalty upon him. Doctor Robinson had granted that the consequences of the first sin are to Adam's posterity precisely what they were to Adam himself. But to Adam they were certainly first guilt, and then depravity. To Adam's descendants, also, the consequences of Adam's sin came in the same order. Jonathan Edwards saw this when he said: " The sin of the apostasy is not theirs merely because God imputes it to them; but it is truly and properly theirs, and on that ground God imputes it to them." And Edwards is only echoing Paul, who bases God's infliction of the penalty of death, not upon the ground that all are sinful, but upon the ground that " all sinned." Since the depravity is caused by the apostasy, we cannot be guilty of the depravity without first being guilty of the apostasy.

Doctor Robinson was a realist, but here, unfortunately, he did not consistently apply his realism. He should have considered that as Adam's act was condemnable apart from its consequences, so we, who were one with him in the transgression, have incurred guilt apart from the depravity which is a consequence of that act. A failure to recognize this leads him to mitigate the judgment which he passes upon the depravity itself. He says it is " condemnable and punishable, because it is in a sense sinful and guilty," and yet he concedes that " the words ' sin ' and ' guilt,' when applied to an inherited nature, must necessarily have a restricted meaning as compared with that which attaches to them when applied to our voluntary actions. In the consequences of all voluntary wrong acts there is mingled an element of remorse, which can never enter into the penal consequences of a state or of a nature." When it is objected, however, that inborn depravity cannot be sin, if conscience brings no charge of guilt against it, he replies that, however true this may be of the nature in its passive state, it is not true when the nature is roused to activity. Then the "conscience traces guilt to its seat in the inherited nature." But guilt of nature Doctor Robinson does not explain. How we can be responsible for what is ours solely through the act of our ancestors, he does not tell us. His theology would have been more consistent if he had been more thoroughly realistic and Pauline, and had said plainly, "In Adam's fall we sinned all." It is unjust to hold us guilty of the effect if we are not first guilty of the cause.

But in spite of Doctor Robinson's unwillingness to press his principle to its logical conclusion, there can be no doubt that he believed in the organic unity of the race, and in its common guilt and punishableness. Even infants are born with a nature sinful, depraved, and condemnable, though they are in a salvable condition, and if they die in infancy they are saved. In their case the evil which has been involuntarily incurred is removed by a remedy which is provided equally without the volition of the sufferer. The explanation given of the method of their salvation is significant. "To destroy the germ of evil in the heart of an infant, it must, somewhere and somehow, as well as children and adults, be brought to a knowledge and love of Christ; in order to this knowledge and love, while as yet the evil is undeveloped into habit, Christ needs only to be seen; and if Christ, who, while on earth, said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,' shall receive the little ones to himself on their entrance into another life, it certainly is neither inconceivable nor improbable that the undeveloped evil of their nature should give place at once to an implanted and all-controlling love for him whom to know is life eternal." I do not understand Doctor Robinson to be teaching here that, in the infant, mere knowledge can eradicate sin, or that sin can be forgiven without atonement. I understand our author to be describing simply the method in which, in the case of the infant, the atonement is applied and the heart is renewed by the Spirit of God.

As I have already intimated, Doctor Robinson was a strong believer in the absolute deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he also believed in Christ's complete humanity. His conception of the relation between the divine and the human elements in Christ is so essential to his system that we must endeavor to grasp it precisely. He has the great merit of being one of the first in America to unfold the doctrine of the Kenosis, or self-limitation of the Logos in becoming man. The old orthodoxy had made the person of Christ unintelligible and incredible by maintaining our Lord's continual consciousness of his deity and his continual use of divine powers. This was either

Docetism, a doctrine of merely illusory humanity, or Nestorianism, a doctrine virtually of two persons as well as of two natures. Our author began his study from the oneness of Christ's person. "The personal Logos was not so associated and conjoined with a personal Jesus as to produce a kind of double personality;" he rather "assumed, by supernatural generation, from the Virgin Mary, a true human nature, though not, as distinct from himself, a human personality. . . Christ assumed human nature, but he did not assume a human person; and the two natures were so conjoined as to constitute a single personality." He inveighed against separating the two natures, and conceiving that our Lord spoke at one time as man and at another time as God. He maintained that this attributed unveracity to Christ, and held that our Lord spoke everywhere and always as the God-man, even when he declared that he was ignorant of the day of the end. I regard this doctrine of the single personality of Christ, and of the divine self-limitation in becoming man, as one of the noblest and most valuable parts of his teaching.

What human nature did our Lord take? Our author answers rightly: "He took the common nature of the race; not the nature of the unfallen Adam; nor yet a new-created nature, different alike from Adam's and our own; but the nature of those whom he came to save." But our race and nature were sinful; did Christ, then, in taking our nature, take a sinful nature, as Edward Irving taught? This Doctor Robinson denies. "Sin," he says, "is properly predicable only of personality, the hereditary depravity of man is derived by the natural descent of personal life from Adam; Christ did not derive a personal human life *ex traduce* from Adam, but took our human nature by a supernatural act, which cut off its hereditary guilt, though not the hereditary consequences of its guilt. . . Hereditary depravity was in his case cut off from transmission by the supernatural manner of his assuming it. . . No truth is more plainly, continuously, and variously taught, than the perfect sinlessness, the unapproachable moral perfection, of Jesus Christ; and sinlessness was all the more conspicuous and marvelous that it was maintained under the load of a fallen nature and in the midst of a sinful race, with whom he had so closely identified himself. . . Notwithstanding the nature he had assumed, and the race with which he had allied himself, he could preserve his sinlessness, because the basis of his personality was his divine nature and not the human. In becoming incarnate, he assumed human nature in its completeness, and yet so assumed it as completely to control it; whereas, in the birth of individual men, human nature simply assumes the form of personal life which it completely controls. Christ was conscious of the infinite purity of his own person because his consciousness was grounded in the divine nature which underlay and conditioned his whole personal being."

These extracts from Doctor Robinson's chapter on "The Two Natures of Jesus Christ" make it very plain that he did not regard our Lord as inheriting either depravity or guilt. And yet he inherits the consequence of guilt—that is, penalty. This is our author's doctrine of the atonement. He insists that the necessity of the atonement is grounded in the holiness of God. "God, as holy, necessarily repels all sinners from his presence, and by the very act of repulsion punishes them. Whoever, therefore, should assume our nature, and take his place among us as one of our race, and take it for the express purpose of redeeming us from sin and reconciling us to God, would be under the inexorable necessity of so confronting the divine repulsion as to remove it, or he could not achieve our redemption. . . He must bear our penalty and, in bearing, survive it." But in addition to this: "The substitution which takes place in the intervention of Christ for the salvation of men must be of such a nature as to secure an actual personal righteousness on the part of the redeemed." Atonement then is, on the one hand, as respects God, an expiation of guilt, and as respects man, a means of reconciliation, renewal, and final salvation.

In criticizing Doctor Shedd's theory that the atonement is "an atonement *ab intra,* a self-oblation on the part of Deity himself, by which to satisfy those immanent and eternal imperatives of the divine nature, which without it must find their satisfaction in the punishment of the transgressor, or else be outraged," Doctor Robinson objects that "an atonement made necessary to balance the character of God could not be a gratuity to men. . . Literal forensic substitution," he says, "involves a contradiction of the idea of absolute justice on which the whole theory rests. An absolute justice in God, which his mercy could satisfy or not, shuts us up to the alternative either of a one-sided nature in God, or of an atonement which is stripped of every vestige of grace." He has no patience with the representation of an "immutable justice which is so far mutable as to accept of a commutation both of persons and of punishments." We are obliged to grant that, to make Doctor Shedd's view tenable, another principle of identification must be introduced which Doctor Shedd has not mentioned; only the union of all men with Christ by creation can make Christ's substitution consistent with justice. Of this principle, which neither Doctor Robinson nor Doctor Shedd has recognized, I shall speak hereafter. I wish now only to say that Doctor Robinson does not seem fully to apprehend Doctor Shedd's position in the matter of the relation of the divine attributes. The latter's conception of justice does not exclude the possibility of grace, since but for grace Christ never would have "offered himself through the eternal Spirit without blemish unto God." As Doctor Shedd himself has said: "Where then is the mercy of God, in case justice is strictly satisfied by a vicarious person? There is mercy in permitting another person to do for the sinner what the sinner is bound to do for himself; and still greater mercy in providing that person; and greater still, in becoming that person."

But let us define more clearly Doctor Robinson's own doctrine. "Christ took our nature with its exposures and penal liabilities. He suffered the woes which but for him must have come on every member of the race." These woes are not to be conceived as positive and external inflictions by God, but as the natural consequences of his assumption of human nature, the laws of nature being the laws of God, and all consequences being sanctions and penalties. He would have had to suffer what he did, even though no one was saved. So far, we have something like Robertson's view, that Christ's sufferings were the necessary result of the position in which he had placed himself of conflict or collision with the evil that is in the world; he came in contact with the whirling wheel and was crushed by it. But Doctor Robinson held to a principle which never entered into Robertson's theology,—that the whirling wheel was not Satan's instrument of torture, but God's enginery of justice. "Christ bore his sufferings as the true penal sufferings for sin. In bearing them, he triumphed over them. To every one who has fellowship with him as a sufferer for sin, and faith in him as a personal Saviour from its power, it is divinely given to share in his triumphs. He exhausted and survived our penal woes; has so fulfilled the moral law and borne all the penalties of the race, that the believer finds his obligations fulfilled, his sins and their consequences taken away, himself put upon a new career of Christian living. Christ becomes our Saviour, not by imputation, but solely through the control which he exercises over us when we come to understand him as the one who has borne all our woes, and so borne them as to make full satisfaction to God, and to impart to all who believe an everlasting salvation."

The subjective element so predominates here, both in the pains Christ bears and in the redemption the believer experiences, that we can easily understand how Doctor Robinson was regarded by many as holding to the Bushnellian or moral-influence theory of the atonement. We must remember, however, that he continuously and vigorously protested against that theory in its assertions that God is primarily love rather than holiness, and that law is essentially decretive or a creation of will; while he maintained on the contrary that it was justice which made the atonement necessary, and that the sufferings of Christ were an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of the world. I cannot harmonize his view of the atonement with his view of the attributes of God, except by supposing that here too, he was dominated by his impulse to reality, and that the idea of the immanent God was continually asserting itself in his thought. To him there was a holiness of God—which the Bushnellian or moral-influence theory practically denied; but to him also this holiness of God expressed itself mainly, if not entirely, in the order of nature—which the Bushnellian or moral-influence theory tried to recognize, though it called God only love. This explanation, I am convinced, will commend itself to us more fully when we have examined Doctor Robinson's views of justification and of faith, in both of which the subjective element is given what seems an overweening prominence, yet in both of which it appears certain that he intended to set forth what he regarded as the substance of the old objective theology.

Granting that God's holiness expressed itself in nature, however, it is still necessary to ask whether Doctor Robinson succeeded in reconciling Christ's sufferings with the orthodox premises from which he set out. I must be allowed to record my doubts. He fails to show that either law or justice has any claim upon

Christ. And yet the foundation of the system is the holiness or justice of God, and the law as the necessary and unchangeable expression of God's nature. Justice simply renders to all their due, and penalty is but the correlative and consequence of guilt. We have already seen, however, that our own native depravity is visited with penalty although we have not originated it, and now we are told that Christ was visited with penalty though he had neither depravity nor guilt. If both depravity and guilt were cut off in his case by his supernatural conception, how can he justly suffer? Greg, in his "Creeds of Christendom," speaks of "the strangely inconsistent doctrine that God is so *just* that he could not let sin go unpunished, yet so *unjust* that he could punish it in the person of the innocent. It is for orthodox dialectics," he continues, "to explain how the divine justice can be impugned by pardoning the guilty, and yet vindicated by punishing the innocent." I do not see that Doctor Robinson's scheme at all escapes Greg's criticism, or shows any consistent method of forgiveness. As, in the case of hereditary depravity, God's procedure in charging upon us guilt can be justified only upon the scriptural ground that we were seminally and organically one with our first father in the transgression; so the visiting of the penalties of the race upon Christ our Lord can be justified only upon the ground that he too was heir with us to the same guilt and condemnation, even though depravity was cut off by his immaculate conception in the womb of the Virgin. And if any ask how thus becoming one of the race can load him with anything more than his portion of the common guilt of the fall, I answer that he was "the root," as well as "the offspring, of David," and that since all men, as well as all things, were created and upheld by him, there naturally and inevitably rested upon him who was their life the burden and responsibility of the sins of his members.

I think the way to such consistent realism as this would have been easier if Doctor Robinson had been able to attach more importance to the doctrine of an ontologic Trinity. That the Son and the Holy Spirit are alike and equally God, he gladly acknowledges. He grants also that "the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, though derived from historical and economic facts, do nevertheless represent eternal, ontological distinctions in the Godhead." But he discards all theories of the relations between them, and contents himself with saying that "there is some ontologic ground for these names, though we do not know what it is." He rejected the idea of an eternal generation, upon the ground that it implied an eternal subordination and dependence. He laid stress upon the fact that in John's first chapter Christ is carefully styled *Logos* until he becomes incarnate, and only then is called *Son of God*. The general tendency of Doctor Robinson's thought is to confine itself to the historical manifestations, and to avoid all attempts to interpret the ante-mundane mystery of the divine nature. We might well follow his example, if we did not seem to recognize in Scripture an effort to teach us something with regard to the pretemporal relations of the persons of the Trinity. Love and counsel are certainly ascribed to them, and the term "Logos" indicates derivation as well as union. There is a "larger Christ" whom recent theology is coming to discover, and this "larger Christ" is enabling us better to understand the work of the Christ incarnate. "The Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world" enables us to see in the sacrifice on Calvary the unfolding to human sight of a pain for human sin that had been undergone ever since sin itself began, in fact, ever since the decree went forth to create a world of which sin was to be an incident. Derivation does not necessarily imply beginning of existence, and subordination does not necessarily imply inequality of nature. Only when we regard the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as intimations of a relation prior to all time, do we know anything of God's essential nature. Revelation is not revelation if it does not tell us something of what God is *in himself,* not simply what he is *to us.* The doctrine of the Trinity assures us that there is both eternal Sonship and eternal Fatherhood in God.

For the reason that Doctor Robinson's view of the Trinity was by preference the historical and economic, he does not discuss the doctrine in its ordinary place immediately after his account of the attributes of God, but reserves his treatment of it until he has considered the doctrine of sin and the person of Christ. The method adopted seems to imply that the Trinity is not so much the foundation as it is the result of the later doctrines of theology. As his thoughts of Christ centered about the manifestation of our Lord in the flesh rather than his work and dignity as the preincarnate Logos, so the idea of the believer's spiritual union with the Redeemer had no special chapter given to it in Doctor Robinson's system. He did not believe in what is commonly called the mystical union, and he regarded the parable of the Vine and the Branches as an Orientalism. The real truth was the influence of Christ *upon* us. Our union with Christ is a union of sympathy, of gratitude, of love. The term "union," like the term "substitution," is a figure of speech which expresses the result *in* us of his work *for* us.

And here, as I have already criticized Doctor Robinson's view of the atonement in its relation to God, and have been unable to find in it any other than a metaphorical execution of the justice which the atonement is supposed to satisfy, so now, when I come to consider his view of the atonement in its relation to man, I am unable to find in it any other than a metaphorical bearing of the penalty of human sin on the part of Christ, or any other than a metaphorical redemption of those who put their trust in him. "The only sense in which one's sins are laid on Christ," he says, "is that one comes into such relations to Christ that he is saved by him. . . There is no transfer of guilt or penalty," for "moral character is not transferable," and "the sense of ill-desert cannot be handed over from one to another. . . Christ bears our penalty only in the sense that faith in him gives us a sense of peace." Even this peace is not the assurance that, now that Christ has suffered, we have no penalty to bear. He does not, by bearing penalty, free *us* from the necessity of bearing it. He rather, by his influence upon us, "*enables* us to bear the penal consequences of our sins, and so to bear them, through the saving faith and the new affections he awakens within us, that we survive them and escape from them as he did." In this way "penalty is so inflicted on the guilty [sinner], in conjunction with his Deliverer, as that by its infliction he shall be rescued from his sin." Salvation is "a remedial or redemptive process through which the effects of a law violated are overborne and finally eradicated by the beneficent working of a new law observed."

Certainly this seems very much like teaching that the sinner, with the simple example and moral influence of Christ, accomplishes both his own atonement and his own renewal. But since Doctor Robinson denied that he held either the theory of Socinus or of Bushnell, I must believe that in his own mind there was some principle of reconciliation which was consciously or unconsciously working, though it was unexpressed. In one of his extemporaneous detached observations to his students he once said: "Salvation is the putting of a reconstructive principle into man's nature. But the subjective change does not come from man, but from God, through established methods." Here is again suggested the same possible principle of explanation which has occurred to us before. God in Christ is immanent in humanity. If all good in man is the work of Christ, then a seemingly subjective theory of the atonement may have an objective side or aspect. What before appeared to be simply man's work is God's work, now that we see all but sin to come from God. Unless some such principle be assumed, I find it difficult to acquit Doctor Robinson of inconsistency, and impossible to deny that the Old School doctrine with which his theology began evaporated, as he went on, in the fire of criticism. I am unwilling to grant that he was conscious of inconsistency. I prefer to say, therefore, that, like Jonathan Edwards, he unconsciously admitted to his system ideas which he did not himself work out to their logical conclusions. Jonathan Edwards intended to be an Old School man, but he unconsciously laid the foundation of the New School theology. Was Doctor Robinson in like manner building better than he knew, and preparing the way for a more modern theology?

It is evident that a conception of salvation like this necessitates a new definition of justification. Justification has commonly been regarded as a change of attitude in God, not a change of moral character in the sinner. God acquits the sinner from penalty, and he restores the sinner to his favor, not because the sinner has become righteous, but solely because he is now joined to Christ by faith. Accompanying this justification, indeed, and giving rise to this faith, is the regeneration of the soul by Christ's Spirit. But Protestant theologians of all grades have felt it supremely important to deny that justification has in it any subjective element, or that the beginning of a holy character is included in it, lest man should seem to have the credit of his own salvation and grace become a matter of debt. In Doctor Robinson's system, however, it was necessary that there should be no merely external acts of God, no judicial decisions apart from the beings upon whom they terminated. To him justification that had in it no element of subjective renewal was a mere legal fiction. Hence he made justification include not only acquittal and restoration to favor, but the implanting of a germ of personal righteousness. He seems at times to recognize that he is here introducing into justification an unscriptural element, for he sometimes speaks of this last as a "concomitant" of justification. But at other times he declares boldly that justification includes a moral change by which the justified becomes personally just. "Justification and righteousness are the same thing from different points of view. Pardon is not a merely arbitrary declaration of forgiveness. Justification is a transformation and a promotion. Salvation introduces a new law into our sinful nature which annuls the law of sin and destroys its penal and destructive consequences. Forgiveness of sins must be in itself a gradual process. The penal consequences of a man's sins are written indelibly on his nature, and remain forever. When Christ said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' it was an objective statement of a subjective fact,—the person was already in a state of living relation to Christ. We are saved only through the enforcement of law on every one of us. Justification and sanctification are not to be distinguished as chronologically and statically different. Sanctification differs from justification only in degree, and both imply an agency of God in different stages of operation." Justification then is not only God's act *for* man, but also God's act *in* man. Our relation to Christ, which, so far as I can see, is only an external relation of gratitude, sympathy, and love, imparts to us a new religious life and a personal righteousness, which together make up the idea of salvation.

I wish to be more than just to my old teacher, but all my reverence for him cannot blind me to the fact that in thus making regeneration a part of justification, and in thus making the sinner's acceptance with God depend upon his possession of some beginnings of subjective righteousness, Doctor Robinson made dangerous concessions to Romanism, and paved the way for all manner of sacramental and High-church theories of Christianity. I am glad that the doctrine of regeneration, which follows that of justification in the system, is so markedly able and scriptural. Regeneration, he says, is the cause of conversion, and the latter follows the former. I interpret him as meaning that there is a logical, not a chronological, sequence here. In regeneration man is passive; in conversion, active. Man cannot and will not regenerate himself —when he tries, the result is either Phariseeism or skepticism. Regeneration is ascribed properly to the Holy Spirit; but we are also " born again by the word of God." The work of the Spirit is not on the truth, but on the soul; for the truth cannot be changed, while the man can be. Regeneration must first become conversion before it can be tested, and the best evidences that the change has been wrought by God are found in love for Christ, holiness of life, and Christian service.

There is much in Doctor Robinson's view of faith which merits attention and approval. He describes faith, in general, as an assent of the understanding combined with a consent of the heart. Saving faith is a crediting of the divine declarations as true, and a confiding trust in Christ as a personal Redeemer. He distinguishes saving faith from the faith of miracles, which he thinks have ceased, not because faith has declined, but because the Holy Spirit has changed the method of his manifestations. Saving faith is neither mere belief in historical facts, nor that full and all-comprehending confidence which is called assurance. It is called saving faith because it has for its end the saving of the soul. "It is related to justification as means to end. In dealing with the self-righteous Jews, Paul urges simple trust in Jesus. But saving is more comprehensive than justifying; and, in dealing with those who love sin, we must urge surrender of the will to the holy dominion of Christ. We must not leave out the condition of an amended life." While we must not confound faith with love, or justification with sanctification, and while we preach the doctrine of justification by faith without works, we must still make it plain that a faith which does not bring forth good works will never justify. I am grateful to Doctor Robinson for this recognition of the element of will in saving faith. Faith not only sees Christ, but it appropriates him. It not only takes Christ, but it gives itself; and without this element of surrender it has no renewing effect. All this is admirable, and I can only regret that it seems, in connection with his doctrine of justification, to intimate that the exercise of will in faith, instead of being simply the surrender of an empty soul to Christ as to one who can fill it, is itself, somehow, the germ of a personal righteousness or the faint beginning of a new obedience of our own —which would be only a more subtle doctrine of salvation by works. I wish, moreover, that this thought of the will in faith, as not only seeing, but appropriating the personal Saviour, had led Doctor Robinson to the more spiritual conception of that union with Christ of which faith is the medium.

In treating of regeneration we have seen that Doctor Robinson regarded the change in the heart of man as wrought by the Holy Spirit through the use of truth as a means. He regarded this uniform use of truth as shutting out the possibility of baptismal regeneration, and as rendering infant baptism an absurdity. Infant baptism, indeed, he called "a rag of Romanism." In his doctrine of the church, therefore, we find our author a rigorous Baptist. Christ himself, however, founded a church only proleptically. In Matthew 18 the word *ecclesia* is not used technically. The organization of the church was the work of the apostles after Pentecost, although the germ of it existed before. The church was an outgrowth of the Jewish synagogue, though its method and economy are different. It is a mistake to regard it as a continuation of the temple with its priesthood and its sacrifices. It rather continues the prophetic office, and represents the progressive as distinguished from the conservative element of Judaism. The government of the church is congregational. Three persons may constitute a church. Councils are only advisory; they have no authority. The diocesan bishop is anti-scriptural and anti-Christian.

The church is organized to proclaim the truth of Christ and to induce submission to Christ, not directly to suppress vice or to regenerate society. Its aims are primarily religious and spiritual, not moral and social, and it has no right to abridge individual liberty, or to tell its members what they are to eat and drink, what societies they are to join, or what marriages to contract. Doctor Robinson regarded baptism as implying death to sin, resurrection to new life in Christ, and entire surrender to the authority of the triune God. Since we are baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, we enter into the same relation to the Son that we sustain to the Father, and baptism can mean nothing less than the assumption of supreme allegiance to Jesus Christ. Baptism is a prerequisite to the Lord's Supper, and no church has the right to celebrate the Lord's Supper with unbaptized persons. The Lord's Supper is the sacred meal of the individual Christian society, and only those who are members of the society have rights at the table. Each individual church, moreover, must determine for itself what is baptism, and any two churches essentially disagreeing as to what baptism is, cannot consistently commune with each other. Yet no one can more earnestly or constantly than Doctor Robinson denounce the spirit of sectarianism. While Christianity exalts Christ, he would say, the sectarian spirit elevates the church above Christ. He frequently used the word "churchism" to designate this pharisaic and divisive tendency. "There is not the least shadow of churchism in Christ. Christ did not say, 'Blessed is he who accepts the Westminster Confession.' Churchism is a revamped and whitewashed Judaism. It keeps up the middle wall of partition which Christ has broken down."

In giving account of Doctor Robinson's views of faith and of the church, I have not the advantage of his printed statements, and I am dependent upon the notes dictated to the last classes of his students in theology. These notes were not revised by him, and it is probable that they do not fully represent him. In preparing them for the press, he would doubtless have explained and enlarged many points which are now very meagerly treated. Yet the notes which I use were given after twenty years of study and of teaching, and they probably contain the substantial conclusions to which he would have subscribed at the close of his service as instructor in the theological seminary. His teaching on eschatology is brief, but it is succinct and clear. The main thought of it is that the future is not separated from the present by any arbitrary line, but that it is the development and outgrowth of that which now is. "Eternal life begins here, and the second death is but the continuance of spiritual death in another and a timeless state of existence."

As to the conditions of personal immortality, our author says, guardedly, in one place: "So far as we know, the soul exists only in connection with an organism, and a personal being cannot communicate with another except through external manifestation or through media. . . We talk of disembodied spirits, but we do not know that there are any such in the universe." Yet he does not deny the possibility of bodiless existence in the intermediate state, but says, rather: "Man is not dependent for consciousness upon the possession of a bodily organization, and therefore will not find in the dissolution of the body a cessation of mental or spiritual existence." He believes that there is to be a personal coming of Christ, and yet he says that Second Adventism, probably including in this term the elements of definite prediction and of premillennialism that so often mingle with it, "stultifies the system and scheme of Christianity." He means that to depend for the progress of the church upon Christ's visible and literal return is to discredit the dispensation and power of the Holy Spirit, which Christ himself declared to be better for the church than his own bodily presence would be.

The doctrine of the resurrection is stated with great originality and suggestiveness. Here personality is the indestructible principle. Both at man's first creation and after death, personality takes to itself a material organization. It is a divinely empowered second cause. This refutes materialism and annihilationism alike. Materialism would make the soul the product of the body, and with the breaking to pieces of the body the soul would pass into nothingness. But while science teaches that merely animal life is a mechanical process, we cannot explain the facts except by supposing that this very animal life is the effect and instrument of a personal power. This organific power we call the soul. The body then reflects the soul. When the process of resurrection begins we do not know. It may begin at the moment when man becomes a Christian. It may begin at the moment of death. However this may be, it is certain that there is to be a future resurrection of the body. Yet we are not to regard the future body as necessarily containing any of the material particles that constitute our present physical organisms. The individuality only, the personal identity, will be preserved. It is simply a question of God's power, and God will give to each a body such as shall please him. When a student asked Doctor Robinson at this point: " But if Christ arose with identically the same body that was laid away in the tomb, how can his resurrection be a type of ours? " he simply answered: " The nature of Christ's resurrection body is an open question."

The same disposition to regard the beginnings of eternal life and eternal death as manifest in this world appears in his doctrine of the judgment. " Judgment," he says, " begins here. The searing of conscience in this life is a penal infliction. There is no *day* of judgment or of resurrection all at one time. Judgment is an eternal process. Man is being judged every day. Every man honest with himself knows where he is going to." I do not understand Doctor Robinson here to deny that there is to be a *culmination* of the judicial process at some definite time in the future. I understand him only to deny that divine judgment is *confined* to the future, or that the word *day* is to be taken in its literal and limited sense. And so with the doctrine of heaven and hell. " Heaven is not to be compared to a grasshopper on a shingle, floating down stream. . . Heaven is a place where men are taken up as they are when they leave this world, and where they are carried forward. There is no intimation of that sudden transformation at the hour of dissolution which is commonly supposed. No sinners can go there, but men may enter there who still possess defects [in the sense of incompletenesses] of character " [and in the other world these defects or incompletenesses may be gradually removed]. If this is all that Doctor Briggs has meant by his phrase, "sanctification after death," we may concede its truth and regard him as advocating only what Doctor Robinson had advocated before him.

The same principles are applied to the doctrine of eternal punishment. The actual existence of sin and death in this world argues the possibility of the continued existence of sin and death hereafter. Punishment begins in this life, and is carried on in the next. Doctor Robinson does not deny that there are positive punishments in the world to come, though he regards punishment as essentially subjective, the reaction of natural law and not the infliction of arbitrary will. There does not need to be any whipping-post set up in the universe, in order to justify every word of Scripture threatening. It is better for us not to conceive of punishment as objective judicial infliction, but to remember, rather, that wherever sin occurs, there, by natural law, penalty is inevitable. "We have no right to say that there are no other consequences of sin but natural ones," but rather to say that "the eternal law of wrong-doing is that the wrong-doer is cursed thereby, and that harpies and furies follow him into eternity. . . The fundamental argument for eternal punishment is the reproductive power of evil, the reactionary power of a wrong elective preference, the reduplicating energy of sin. . . Penalty in the divine law enforces itself. We shall never be as complete as if we had never sinned. We shall bear the scars of our sins forever." As penalty is not reformatory, and as the will may become obdurate in evil, there is no reason why the sufferings of the finally impenitent may not be eternal. Neither the justice nor the benevolence of God is impugned by visiting eternal sin with eternal punishment.

As I close this account of the theology of a great teacher and a great man, I find myself impressed anew with the boldness and independence of his views, and also with the fact that he represented consciously or unconsciously a great movement of human thought, a movement of which Schleiermacher was the great precursor, and of which the Ritschlian School in Germany and the New Theology in this country are later types and manifestations. Twenty-five years ago Doctor Robinson probably taught in the Rochester Theological Seminary a more modern system than was at that time taught in any other evangelical seminary of any denomination whatever. His students can never blame him for not being abreast of his time, for he was greatly ahead of his time. In his love for reality and his determination to rid theology of its ancient incubus of legal fictions, he rendered invaluable service to every student who came under his influence. He had a large and free conception of inspiration, yet he considered the Scriptures as authoritative, and from philosophy to Scripture as a whole, he was accustomed continually to appeal. The fundamental principles of his system with regard to holiness, law, and sin were so powerfully taught that even what seem to be his own aberrations from them failed to carry his students with him; the nails had been fastened in so sure a place that he himself was not afterward able to pull them out. A philosophy of relativity involved him in some ambiguities and inconsistencies. We are obliged to dissent from some of the latter doctrines of his scheme, or to confess that we cannot understand them. But even here it is possible that his views may be interpreted in the light of God's immanence in nature and in man, and be found to have in them less of paradox and more of truth than some of his critics have imagined.

He was himself a man of tolerant mind, and while he claimed the right to think for himself, he granted the same right to others. He was a genuine Baptist, in that he believed in soul-liberty, and he never thought the true interests of the Church of Christ could be subserved by withholding from any of its members the right of private judgment. His soul was stirred as by the sound of a trumpet whenever it was proposed to cast out of our ecclesiastical or Christian fellowship those who differed from us only in matters doubtful or unimportant. And so I give to him, what he freely gave to others—the recognition of his loftiness of mind, of his sincerity, of his eagerness to know the truth, of his bold advocacy of what he believed, even in the face and teeth of opposition. He has raised up a generation of thinkers and preachers who believe in manliness in the ministry. He has left behind him a body of divinity as stimulating and suggestive as any that had been written in America since Jonathan Edwards' day, and fully worthy to be classed with the works of Charles Hodge and of Henry B. Smith. All of his opinions are worthy of study, and many of them may yet prove the germs of progress in theology. May we who succeed him have something of his spirit, follow him where he followed Christ, improve upon his teaching where we can, do honest and independent work, as he did, in the building up of the fair and symmetrical structure of Christian truth! He was one who lived in and for his pupils; he cast his bread upon the waters, expecting that it would return to him only after many days; he did the sowing, and it has been ours to reap the fruit of his labors. God grant that we may all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, and may enter at last, as he has done, into the presence of the great Teacher, where he who sowed and they who reaped shall rejoice together!

XXVII

DEGENERATION[1]

The past half-century has been distinguished by the apparent triumph of the doctrine of evolution. The most conservative are now willing to grant that the present is built upon the past, and is in some sense a development from that past. The only controversy now is between those who interpret evolution as a blind movement and those who interpret it as a movement of intelligence. Charles Darwin acknowledged that natural selection could not account either for origins or for progress. It explains the survival of the fittest, but not the arrival of the fittest. It can give no guarantee that the lower shall be followed by the higher; on the other hand, the lower may still deteriorate and may even become extinct—in fact, deterioration or extinction has been the fate of nine-tenths of the species of the past.

Progress requires something more than adaptation to environment. Increase of brute force may adapt a species to its environment, while this increase only operates to degrade, if we measure the result by any intellectual or moral standard. We can never know what is the fittest, whether brute force or mental gifts, until we judge evolution in its relation to man. Because man is the most complex object in the universe, we estimate all the lower orders by the greater or less complexity of their organization. Increasing differentiation of function is one great mark of progress, only because it brings life nearer to its culmination in man. Atrophy of organs marks degeneration, unless it is accompanied by advancing intelligence. But this is only to say that progressive evolution cannot be blind. Evolution is only a method. If it is to lead to useful ends, it must be the method of a wise and designing mind. An unteleological evolution is an irrational process, even if it is not a contradiction in terms.

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[1] An essay read before the Alpha Chi Club, December 12, 1907.

When we consider the evolution of man, we need to remember that he is not a mere compound of mechanical forces, but is an agent, capable of resisting and thwarting the benevolent design with which he has been created. Man's history has not been one of uniformly upward progress. The privilege of going down to hell is not confined to the lower orders of creation. Man too has had his periods of retrogression and decay. Man is the only animal that fails to realize the end of its being, and this for the reason that he has the highest endowment of all—the endowment of free will. Ignoring this fact of man's constitution, anthropologists have too often regarded the most brutal conditions as indicative of man's original state, whereas they should be regarded as evidences of degeneration. My aim at present is to show that this latter explanation is not only scientifically possible, but that the facts render it much the more probable. I claim that, while progressive evolution is the method of an immanent divine will, there is an incidental retrogressive evolution which profoundly modifies the former, and which results from a perverse human will. Civilization advances in spite of opposition; the stream has many a backset, temporary though the backset may be; degeneration is as plain as is progress; man mars God's work, even though God overrules the evil for good.

Those who hold to an unteleological evolution, by which I mean an evolution in which progress is an accident and not the result of design, are inclined to deny that brutal conditions among mankind are evidence of degeneration from an earlier and better state. They hold, on the contrary, to an originally savage condition of mankind, and to a continuous upward progress since that time. In order to estimate their theory at its proper value, it is necessary sharply to distinguish between savagery and mere childhood. The biblical account of man's first state represents him as a child, but it never represents him as a savage. He is without clothing, but up to the time of his transgression he is without fear. He is lord of nature and keeper of the garden. He names the lower animals and has them in subjection, even though he is still ignorant of the metals and has no instrument of music. He has a moral sense which can be appealed to, and he enjoys at least occasional intercourse with his Maker. He is undeveloped, but he has right intuitions and inclinations, and he is free to choose between good and evil.

What now is savagery? A distinguished citizen of Rochester, Mr. Lewis H. Morgan, has given us the most definite and exhaustive answer. He divided human progress into three great periods—the savage, the barbarian, and the civilized. Each of the two former periods has three states. The savage period has a lowest state, marked by the attainment of speech and by subsistence upon roots; a middle state, marked by fish-food and fire; an upper state, marked by the use of the bow and by hunting. The barbarian period, in like manner, has a lower state, marked by the invention and use of pottery; a middle state, marked by the use of domestic animals, maize, and building-stone; and an upper state, marked by the invention and use of iron tools. The third period is that of civilization, which is characterized by the introduction of the phonetic alphabet and by writing. In harmony with this general view is that of a writer in the "Contemporary Review," who defines civilization as "enforced social organization, with written records, and hence intellectual development and social progress."

It will be noticed that Mr. Morgan's definition of savagery is thus far framed from the purely physical point of view. With the single exception of speech, which is an intellectual endowment, we have only roots, fish-food, fire, the bow, and hunting, as characteristics of the savage state. We might concede that these were real conditions of man's first estate, and yet escape the conclusion that he was degenerate. Mr. Morgan, however, does not stop with attributing these physical features to man's earliest condition. He proceeds to assert that promiscuous sexual relations were characteristic of that condition, that matriarchy was universal, and that the family was a later development. Other writers go further than Mr. Morgan, and attribute not only promiscuity and matriarchy, but also infanticide, cannibalism, and fetishism, to primitive man. Savagery thus assumes a brutal and immoral aspect. It is this conception of man's early state which Sir John Lubbock presents in his books on "Prehistoric Times" and "The Origin of Civilization." He declares that "the primitive condition of mankind was one of utter barbarism"; and by barbarism he means the lowest savagery and the most extreme brutality. It is this view of man's original state which I seek to refute, and to refute by adducing evidence that immoral and brutal characteristics are the result of degeneration.

Mr. Morgan's classification may aid us in defining terms, but when he endeavors to show that mankind has passed through his three periods in chronological order, civilization having everywhere been preceded by barbarism, and barbarism by savagery, he substitutes, in our judgment, theory for fact, and he builds up his scheme upon an insufficient induction. Important ethical and even biological data are ignored. His derivation of the family from a previous state of promiscuity is discredited by later investigators, and may now be regarded as conclusively disproved. As I shall deal shortly with this particular aspect of the subject, I content myself here with expressing the opinion that the sudden currency which Mr. Morgan's view obtained, was in large part due to an overzealous desire to piece out Mr. Darwin's new doctrine as to the origin of man. Any view was welcome which tended to strengthen faith in a brute ancestry and an unteleological development. If man's earliest condition was that of savagery, it was easy to believe that the savage was only a developed beast; or, to put it more succinctly, if the first man was a perfect brute, the highest brute must have been an imperfect man.

The thesis which we set out to prove, however, is not that there has been no development of the human race. This development we grant and rejoice in. What we contend for is that the origin and the law of this development require us to presuppose an ordaining and governing intelligence greater than man's own, especially in view of the fact that humanity from the beginning has not only shown profound ignorance of its own interest and destiny, but has also wilfully hindered its own progress. History shows a law of degeneration, supplementing and often counteracting the tendency to development. In the earliest times of which we have any record, we find nations in a high state of civilization; but in the case of every nation whose history runs back of the Christian era—as, for example, the Romans, the Greeks, and the Egyptians—the subsequent progress has been downward, and no nation is known to have recovered from barbarism except as the result of influence from without.

It will probably not be denied that modern nations fall far short of the old Greek perception and expression of beauty. Modern Greeks admire, but they cannot equal, the sculpture or the architecture of their classical ancestors. Modern Egyptians, Italians, and Spaniards are unquestionably degenerate races, and the same is true of Australians and Hottentots, as well as of Turks. Abyssinians are now polygamists, though their ancestors were Christians and monogamists. The physical degeneration of portions of the population of Ireland is well known. Although Herbert

Spencer denies that savagery is always caused by lapse from civilization, he grants that most savages "had ancestors in higher states, and among their beliefs remain some which were evolved during those higher states. . . It is quite possible," he says, "and I believe highly probable, that retrogression has been as frequent as progression."

In his "Ethical Aspects of Evolution," Benett claims that evolution is everywhere the parallel growth of opposite tendencies. It is certain that evolution does not necessarily involve progress as regards particular races, since many die out that the more favored may survive. There is deterioration in all the organic orders. "Some shrimps, by the adjustment of their bodily parts," as the biologists assert, "go onward to the higher structure of lobsters and crabs; while others, taking up the habit of dwelling in the gills of fishes, sink downward into a state closely resembling that of the worms." Lankester tells us that "the habit of parasitism clearly acts upon animal organization in this way. Let the parasitic life be once secured, and away go legs, jaws, eyes, and ears; the highly gifted crab, insect, or annelid, may become a mere sac, absorbing nourishment and laying eggs. . . It is quite possible that animals with considerable complexity of structure, at least as complex as Ascidians, may have been produced from more highly organized ancestors."

If upward evolution is measured by increasing differentiation of function, then this loss of organs and this simplification of structure must be regarded as a process of degeneration. Any adaptation to environment which involves diminution of intelligence is a downward evolution. Professor Shaler, of Harvard, indeed, speaks as follows: "It is commonly supposed that the direction of movement [in the variation of species] is ever upward. The fact is, on the contrary, that in a large number of cases, perhaps in the aggregate more than half, the change gives rise to a form which, by all the means by which we determine relative rank, is to be regarded as regressive or degradational. . . Species, genera, families, and orders, have all, like the individuals of which they are composed, a period of decay, in which the gain won by infinite toil and pains is altogether lost in the old age of the group."

Shaler goes on to say that, in the matter of variation, successes are to failures as one to one hundred thousand, and, if man be counted as the solitary distinguished success, then the proportion is something like one to one hundred million. No species that passes away is ever reinstated.

If man were now to disappear, there is no reason to believe that by any process of change a similar creature would be evolved, however long the animal kingdom continued to exist. The use of these successive chances is inexplicable except upon the hypothesis of an infinite designing wisdom, and it is this consideration which converted Shaler from an agnostic into a theist.

A similar argument may be constructed with regard to man's later history. In his work entitled "Social Evolution," Kidd has shown that progress is effected not by, but in spite of, individual effort and intention. Professor Clifford indeed declared that mankind is a risen and not a fallen race. But there is no real contradiction between these two views. Both are true. There are two principles at work in human history. Humanity has ever received divine reenforcements of its physical life, in spite of its moral and spiritual deterioration, and Tennyson can well speak of:

> Evolution, ever climbing after some ideal good,
> And Reversion, ever dragging Evolution in the mud.

Evolution often becomes devolution, if not devilution. Tylor, in his book entitled "Primitive Culture," presents a view far better warranted by the facts than is that of Lubbock. Tylor favors a theory of development, but with degeneration "as a secondary action, largely and deeply affecting the development of civilization." The Duke of Argyll comes very near the truth when he says: "Civilization and savagery are both the results of evolutionary development; but the one is a development in the upward, the latter in the downward direction; and, for this reason, neither civilization nor savagery can rationally be looked upon as the primitive condition of man."

Had savagery been man's primitive condition, he never could have emerged by any power of his own. As a moral being, man does not tend to rise, but to fall, and that with a geometric progress, except he be elevated and sustained by some force from without and above himself. While man once civilized may advance in some scientific and artistic respects, yet *moral* ideas are apparently never developed from within. For this reason Archbishop Whately wisely argued that man needed not only a divine Creator, but a divine Instructor. And President Julius Seelye has given us an apt illustration: " The first missionaries to the Indians in Canada took with them skilled laborers to teach the savages how to till their fields, to provide them with comfortable homes, clothing, and food. But the Indians preferred their wigwams, skins, raw flesh, and filth. Only as Christian influences taught the Indian his inner need, and how this was to be supplied, was he led to wish and work for the improvement of his outward condition and habits. Civilization does not reproduce itself. It must first be kindled, and it can then be kept alive only by a power genuinely Christian." We might multiply instances, but one other will suffice. Both Japan and China were stagnant, if not decadent, until touched by the arts and the religion of Christian lands. Degeneration is more natural than progress, until a barbarous people comes in contact with influences from without.

Leaving now these general considerations, we pass to arguments more particular. An originally savage condition of mankind has been inferred from the succession of implements and weapons, from stone to bronze and iron. But Mason, in his " Origins of Invention," a very thorough discussion of the subject, declares that " there is no evidence that a Stone age ever existed in some regions. In Africa, Canada, and perhaps Michigan, the Metal age was as old as the Stone age." Late investigations, in fact, have made it probable that the Stone age of some localities was contemporaneous with the Bronze and Iron ages of others, while certain tribes and nations, instead of making progress from one to the other, were never, so far back as we can trace them, without the knowledge and use of metals. Rawlinson tells us that "the explorers who have dug deep into the Mesopotamian mounds, and have ransacked the tombs of Egypt, have come upon no certain traces of savage men in those regions which a widespread tradition makes the cradle of the human race."

The arts of civilization can certainly be lost. Rude art is often the debasement of a higher, instead of being the earlier. The rudest art in a nation may co-exist with the highest. Even cave-life may accompany high civilization. Arthur Mitchell, in his work "The Past in the Present," gives some curious illustrations from modern Scotland, where the burial of a cock for epilepsy, and the sacrifice of a bull, were until very recently extant. Certain arts have unquestionably been lost, as glass-making and iron-working in Assyria. Even without such knowledge and use, man is not necessarily a barbarian, though he may be a child. The Tyrolese peasants show that a rude people may be moral, and a very simple people may be highly intelligent. The most ancient men do not appear to have been inferior to the latest in their natural endowments, whether physical or intellectual.

The barbarous customs to which this view looks for its support may be better explained as marks of broken-down civilization than as relics of a primitive savagery. Even if they indicated a former state of barbarism, that state might have been itself preceded by a condition of comparative culture. Lubbock seems to admit that cannibalism was not primeval; yet he shows a general tendency to take every brutal custom as a sample of man's first state; and this, in spite of the fact that many such customs are demonstrably the result of corruption. Bride-catching, for example, is perfectly natural, as a part of the process of spoiling the vanquished in war. Since women can be made wives, concubines, or drudges, they become a prey to the victor. Bride-catching could not possibly have been primeval. Where it is not an incident of war, it is an exaggeration and perversion of male gallantry. Its origin may be found in the coyness of the female—a coyness seen even in the higher orders of the brute creation, where female animals often run after the male and then turn to flee, only submitting after long pursuit and much persuasion. Doctor Nansen tells us that on the east coast of Greenland the only method of contracting a marriage is for the man to go to the girl's tent, catch her by the hair or anything else that offers a hold, and drag her off to his dwelling without further ado. Violent scenes are often the result, as, without resistance, the woman fears to lose her reputation for modesty. But the woman's relatives meanwhile stand quietly looking on, as the struggle is considered a purely private affair.

"Cannibalism and infanticide," says Gulick, "are unknown among the anthropoid apes. These must be the results of degradation. Pirates and slaveholders are not men of low and abortive intelligence, but men of education, who deliberately throw off all restraint, and who use their powers for the destruction of society." "There is no cruel treatment of females among animals," says Mark Hopkins. "If man came from the lower animals, then he cannot have been originally savage; for you find the most of this cruel treatment among savages," and not among the lower animals.

Henry Drummond, in his "Ascent of Man," gives us a striking simile. "When a boy's kite comes down in our garden we do not hold that it originally came from the clouds. So nations went up before they came down. There is a national gravitation. The stick age preceded the Stone age, but has been lost." Tylor instances "street arabs." He compares street arabs to a ruined house, but savage tribes to a builder's yard. It has been well said that "as plausible an argument might be constructed, out of the deterioration and degradation of some of the human family, to prove that man may have evolved downward into an anthropoid ape, as that which has been constructed to prove that he has been evolved upward from one."

Sir H. H. Johnston, an administrator who has had a wider experience of the natives of Africa than any other man living, declares that "the tendency of the Negro for several centuries past has been an actually retrograde one—return toward the savage and even the brute. If he had been cut off from the immigration of the Arab and the European, the purely Negroid races, left to themselves, so far from advancing toward a higher type of humanity, might have actually reverted by degrees to a type no longer human." There is no higher authority in anthropology than Ratzel's "History of Mankind." It is an exhaustive summary of the latest investigations. And this is the testimony of Ratzel: "We assign no great antiquity to Polynesian civilization. In New Zealand it is a matter of only some centuries back. In newly occupied territories the development of the population began upon a higher level, and then fell off. The Maori's decadence resulted in the rapid impoverishment of culture, and the character of the people became more savage and cruel. Captain Cook found objects of art worshiped by the descendants of those who produced them."

I have already intimated my belief that recent researches have discredited Mr. Lewis H. Morgan's theory of an original brutal promiscuity of the human race. I proceed now to indicate the grounds for this belief, and I quote to a large extent the words of others. "The theory of an original promiscuity," says Ritchie, "is rendered extremely doubtful by the habits of many of the higher animals." "The solitary life of the manlike apes shows that man was not originally a gregarious animal. The gorilla usually lives in pairs or families, and there is only one adult male attached to each group." (Westermarck, 42.) "A sort of family life," says E. B. Tylor, "lasting for the sake of the young beyond a single pairing season, exists among the higher manlike apes. The male gorilla keeps watch and ward over his progeny. He is the antetype of the house-father." We may add that any theory which regards promiscuity as man's original state must itself accept degeneration as an element in evolution, since among the lower creatures from whom man has risen we already find unions of some permanence between the single male and the single female. With the birds, marriage is an almost universal institution, and it is found as a general rule among the anthropomorphous apes. Is it possible to regard man as the product of a merely naturalistic evolution, if at his beginnings he falls so far below creatures of less intelligence than he?

Mr. Morgan cites matriarchy and the reckoning of descent in the female line as proof that promiscuity must have been man's original condition. In such a condition, he argues, it never could be certain who was the father of a child; only the mother was surely known; this certainty of relationship secured the authority of the mother and the giving of her name to the child. But Herbert Spencer shows that, without the assumption of promiscuity, it is perfectly natural that the child should be named from the mother with whom it spends its early life, and Westermarck finds a sufficient explanation of occasional matriarchy in the fact that the tie between a mother and her child is much stronger than that which binds a child to its father. Not only has she given birth to it, but she has also for years been seen carrying it about at her breast. "In the light of present research," says Howard, "the most that can be safely admitted, concerning the system of kinship through females only, is that it has widely existed among the races of mankind, although its prevalence has been greatly exaggerated. . . It is very archaic, yet not necessarily primitive. There is no satisfactory evidence that it implies an original stage of promiscuity." Howard indeed declares that, in the lower hunting stage of human development, "a kind of patriarchate, or androcracy, generally prevailed." Tylor regards the matriarchal system as a later device, for political reasons, to bind together in peace and alliance tribes that would otherwise be hostile. It is an artificial system introduced as a substitute for, and in opposition to, the natural paternal system. When the social pressure is removed, the maternalized husband emancipates himself, and paternalism begins.

The latest works upon the subject are Westermarck's "History of Human Marriage," Howard's "History of Matrimonial Institutions," and Crawley's "The Mystic Rose." The following are the words of Westermarck: "Marriage was probably transmitted to man from some apelike ancestor, and there never was a time when it did not exist in the human race. . . Marriage and the family are intimately connected with one another: it is for the benefit of the young that male and female continue to live together. Marriage is, therefore, rooted in the family, rather than the family in marriage. . . There is not a shred of genuine evidence that promiscuity ever formed a general stage in the social history of mankind. The hypothesis of promiscuity, instead of belonging to the class of hypotheses which are scientifically permissible, has no real foundation, and is essentially unscientific." Howard declares that "Marriage, or pairing between one man and one woman, though the union be often transitory, and the rule often violated, is the typical form of sexual union from the infancy of the human race." And Crawley gives his conclusion as follows: "All the facts are distinctly opposed to the probability that incest or promiscuity was ever generally practised at all. Savage woman was not utterly depraved. One is struck by the high morality of primitive man."

Henry Sumner Maine calls the Bible the most important single document in the history of sociology, because it exhibits authentically the early development of society from the family, through the tribe, into the nation—a progress learned only by glimpses, intervals, and survivals of old usages, in the literature of other nations. The well-nigh universal tradition of a golden age of virtue and happiness corroborates the Scripture record as to an original state of integrity and a subsequent fall. "In Hesiod," says Pfleiderer, "we have the legend of a golden age under the lordship of Chronos, when man was free from cares and toils, in untroubled youth and cheerfulness, with a superabundance of the gifts which the earth furnished of itself; the race was indeed not immortal, but it experienced death as a soft sleep." All this was changed by transgression. The capacity for religious truth depends on moral conditions. Very early races, therefore, have a purer faith than the later ones. Increasing depravity makes it harder for the later generations to exercise faith. The wisdom-literature may have been very early instead of very late, just as monotheistic ideas are clearer the farther we go back. Social degradation has its root in a departure from known ethical standards. As Henry George puts it: "The law of human progress—what is it but the moral law?" Civilization has in vast regions of Asia and of Africa become petrified. "Precisely because Australians and Africans," says Bixby, "have been deficient in average moral quality, have they failed to march upward on the road of civilization with the rest of mankind, and have fallen into these bog-holes of savage degradation." Apart from the corrective and uplifting influence of the immanent God, we can subscribe to Dr. A. J. Gordon's dictum that "the Jordan is the fitting symbol of our natural life, rising in a lofty elevation and from pure springs, but plunging steadily down till it pours itself into the Dead Sea, from which there is no outlet."

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The conclusion to which we are forced by the foregoing discussion has already been anticipated. Yet it may be well to state it once more in summary form. We hold that the theory of evolution is overworked when it is made to guarantee a savage origin of the human race and a continuous upward progress since man's beginning. We grant the principle of development, so long as it is regarded as the purposive method of the immanent God. But we insist that another principle of deterioration must be admitted, as hindering and often counteracting this development, namely, the free will of man and its actual abuse. Primitive man was infantile, but he was not savage. On the contrary, if savagery means a blind submission to animal instincts, man was intelligent and moral. By disobedience to known law, he converted an upward into a downward evolution, at least so far as his moral and spiritual state was concerned. This ethical lapse resulted in frequent and even general physical and social deterioration; although, through the counteracting influence of the divine Spirit, there have been higher aspirations and achievements, and a pushing of humanity in spite of itself toward its true goal and destiny. A very high artistic and poetic development may co-exist with great moral degradation, as in the days of Raphael and the Borgias, when a pope could have his paramour painted for an altar-piece representing the Virgin.

The Scriptures, after all, furnish us with the best philosophy of history. Science does not contradict—it rather confirms the biblical declarations. I have adduced proof of a frequent retrogression in man's history from the writings of such jurists as Sir H. H. Johnston and Sir Henry Sumner Maine; from such naturalists as Lankester, Lyell, and Shaler; from such historians as Rawlinson, Ratzel, and Lange; from such philosophers as Kidd, Bixby, Ritchie, Seelye, Hopkins, Argyll, Martineau, and Herbert Spencer; from such travelers as Mason, Mitchell, and Nansen; from such theologians as Fisher, Diman, Whately, and Gordon; from such anthropologists and ethnologists as Crawley, Tylor, Westermarck, Drummond, and Howard. In the light of this evidence it seems to me still possible and rational to believe that man was made in the image of God; that man's condition was that of an innocent child, but not that of a brutal savage; that he possessed a knowledge of God and of duty; that by transgression he fell into a lower moral state which involved him in degradation and misery; that growing knowledge of the arts, even in the most civilized, was accompanied by a growing moral blindness, until monotheism was replaced by pantheism, polytheism, or atheism. The Apostle Paul, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, has given us the key to history, when he declares that primitive man knew God, but glorified him not as God; that he exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and in consequence was given up to a reprobate mind; and that his degeneration can be counteracted only by regeneration from above.

XXVIII

THE USE OF THE WILL IN RELIGION[1]

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to work, for his good pleasure. (Phil. 2: 12, 13.)

Our first and most important religious act is the signing of a declaration of dependence. We need to recognize our relation to God, to see that he is the source of all good, and that without him we can do nothing. But we are not to be mystics, folding our hands and leaving everything to God. He has made us reasoning and voluntary beings, and when he works in us, he only puts us in more complete possession of our powers of intellect and will. Our declaration of dependence needs to be followed by a declaration of independence. We must see to it that we become co-workers with God and not mere puppets moved by the divine fingers. The true Christian is more of a man than he ever was before, and while God works in him, he is also to work out his own salvation.

This Independence Day is a fit time to consider the use of the will in matters of religion. We can easily see the importance of stern resolve in the achievement of our national independence. Our fathers trusted in God, but they also kept their powder dry. They opened their Congress with prayer, but they also at Lexington and Bunker Hill fired shots that were heard around the world. "Where there is a will, there is a way," says the old proverb; and this is far more true for those who work with God than for those who work without him. Each one of us, like Adam, has a garden to dress and keep,—a garden of the soul given us by God. The laws of moisture and soil and sunshine are matters of the divine working; in a certain sense we have nothing that we have not first received. But then it is also true that we are not automata; without our wills God will not act; our energy and persistence are needed to keep the weeds under and to get the best results of growth. No process of natural evolution will do our work for us. In the history of man moral evolution takes the place of physical evolution. Plants can be made to grow inside a garden wall that would perish on the open heath. God makes us his agents, and so respects the will of man that only through *that* will will he accomplish *his* will.

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[1] A sermon preached in the Congregational Church, Canandaigua, N. Y , on the fourth day of July, 1909.

I wish to apply this principle of activity to some departments of life in which we are often tempted to ignore our responsibility .

And first in the matter of prayer. Have you ever sufficiently considered that praying is commanded? Jesus does not say: "If you ask, you will receive." No; he uses the imperative mood: "Ask, and ye shall receive." Prayer is not optional; it is a duty. "Men *ought* always to pray and not to faint." We are to put *will* into prayer, and to pray hardest when it is hardest to pray. When we pray, we are to will the answer, to expect that our praying will not be in vain; nay, to *take* what we ask, with the grasp of faith, and to believe that we *have* the petitions that we asked.

"Prayer," said Coleridge, "is the intensest exercise of the human understanding." Yes, and the intensest exercise of the human will, for it is the product of God's Spirit within us. And this relieves it from all charge of arbitrariness and selfishness. We work out our own salvation in prayer, only because it is God that works in us to will and to do. Pray then, with all the will you have, and you will find that another higher will is helping your infirmities and making intercession for you. You may begin as weak as Jacob wrestling in the night, and you may end as a very Israel who has striven with God and with men, and has prevailed. Use your will when you pray, and God will make your will a means of accomplishing his will, and of hastening the triumph of his kingdom.

It is easy to see how this putting of will into prayer helps the answer to prayer. God will not do for us what we can do for ourselves, and when we will the result, we are ready, so far as in us lies, to bring about the result. Prayer without the use of means is an insult to God. Can a drowning man refuse to swim, or even to lay hold of the rope that is thrown to him, and yet ask God to save him? Frederick Douglas used to say that when in slavery he often prayed for freedom, but his prayer was never answered until he prayed with his feet, and ran away. True faith is a resting in the Lord after we have done our part. That does not mean that prayer effects nothing outside of us, and that its only influence is its reflex influence upon ourselves. But it does mean that God's working proceeds only as fast as ours; only in our own working have we a right to believe that he works; only when we do all we can, have we the assurance that he will supplement our efforts. "Tie your camel, and commit it to God," said Mohammed. If you leave it untied, all your praying will not prevent its straying from the camp. We must not throw upon the shoulders of Providence the burdens which belong to us. Only when we do all we can to answer our own prayers, only when we summon up our own wills to fulfil God's will, can we take to ourselves the promise: "Rest in Jehovah, and wait patiently for him. . . Trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass."

But I am asked a serious question here. To have a will conformed to the will of God; is this possible except as God works in us to will and to do? And is not this a gift of his Holy Spirit? Let me answer this question by suggesting a second application of my theme to our reception of the Holy Spirit. Here too, we must use our wills. We have been too much accustomed to the idea that we must be passive in all that pertains to the Spirit's influences. We wait for his movements, as if we had nothing to do. When he works, we wonder, as we do when we watch sheet-lightning upon the horizon in summertime. It may instruct us to notice the word Jesus used when he first bestowed the gift of his Spirit. In the upper chamber after his resurrection he breathed upon his disciples and said: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." But the word is a simpler one than even the word "receive"; it is the common word "take." Jesus commands that we *take* what he freely provides. "We cannot *make* peace; but we can *take* peace," says Dr. A. J. Gordon. It is not a passive reception which he requires, but an active appropriation. In other words, there is an appeal to our wills; we are to grasp the promise; we are to take the offered Spirit; we are believingly to put forth effort, and to realize Christ's gift to our souls. "The wind bloweth where it listeth . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Yes, but some things about the wind are known. You must spread your sails to catch the breeze, or your boat will not move as it should. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is not meant to discourage effort, but to encourage it. The Holy Spirit has been given once for all. This is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ever since Pentecost he has filled the rooms where we have been sitting. Like the all-surrounding atmosphere, he has encompassed us and has penetrated into every open cranny of our hearts. We can have his influences at any time by simply taking him for ours. God is more willing to give his pure air than we are to open our windows and let it in. And he is more willing to give his Holy Spirit than we are to ask that last and greatest of his gifts. Nothing is in the way of our receiving but our unwillingness. Let us use our wills in taking what he longs to bestow. In Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him we are made full. We cannot create the Spirit's influences, nor can we earn them, but we can *take* them, by the positive exercise of our wills, so that we are strengthened in the inward man and filled unto all the fulness of God.

Let us apply this principle to the opposite realm of physical healing. How plain it is that the use of the will is needful here! The influence of the mind on the body is almost a discovery of our time. A half-century ago, Edward Payson could preach and pray seraphically on Sunday, retire to rest after a supper of pound cake and mince pie, and then wonder why Satan was let loose upon him the next day. Our physical system was hardly thought to be subject to law, and we were not supposed to be responsible for its condition. Now we begin to see that the body greatly influences the mind. That was the grain of truth in materialism. We have yet to learn that the mind greatly influences the body; that the emotions affect digestion; that the will has much to do in causing and in curing disease. Christian Science so called is simply the exaggeration of this truth, combined with some unwarranted denials. No one can deny that a pessimistic physician may discourage a patient and prolong his illness, while an optimistic physician may communicate cheer and hasten recovery. The determination to get well is a great asset in sickness. Hysterical diseases in particular are largely due to a paralysis of the will, and anything that shocks the patient into even paroxysmal effort helps a return to health.

I would not interpret the miracles of the New Testament by this principle alone, yet I am sure that this principle was not ignored by Jesus. He appealed to faith, and faith is an exercise of will. There is a basis of reason, but upon that basis faith builds a structure of the unseen and the future. Faith is a leap in the dark, but a leap made at the command of one whom we trust and of one who knows. The man with the withered hand, had he anything to do in his cure? Well, at least he had a hand in it. When our Lord bade him stretch forth his hand he had to obey or he would not have been healed. The command was intended to rouse the will, and the action of the will was as needful as the communication of divine power. So when Peter at the Beautiful Gate of the temple fastened his eyes on the lame man and said, "Look on us," it was for the purpose of inoculating the lame man with his own faith, and inducing him to spring to his feet and walk. The Emmanuel Movement, so far as it has biblical warrant and support, is nothing but an application to our modern life of this old-fashioned doctrine that many physical ills can be reached and cured by combining physical with spiritual agencies. Christ is the Saviour of the body as well as of the soul. It should not be beneath the dignity of the physician to use moral influence as well as physical, and Christ, the great physician of the soul, can do greater things than we commonly suppose in the healing of the body.

We need to apply this principle to all speaking for Christ. Every orator or preacher knows how indispensable is the use of the will in *public* address. In a certain sense the speaker must dominate his audience, must convince them that he has something worth saying, and that he can say it. There was an apostolic boldness which was caught from Jesus himself, for when the Jews saw that boldness in the disciples they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. The conviction that they had a message and the determination to utter it, whether men would hear or forbear, imply an exercise and energy of will. But what is true of the preacher is equally true of all Christian workers, in the pew as well as in the pulpit. The

Sunday-school teacher must be a propagandist. The private Christian must be a witness for his Lord. We are to be co-workers with God, not only working out our own salvation, but also the salvation of others. And this involves a struggle with our own reticence and cowardice, and a resolve to be faithful to Christ and to his truth.

But such action of the will has its rich reward. Utterance of the truth gives new perception of the truth and new confidence in the truth. We ourselves clothe the objects of vision with half their qualities. Setting our hearts upon another, we create for ourselves the object of our affection. So every man can say, "My God," "My Saviour," "My Gospel"; for each one of us has his own angle of vision, and sees some things in the infinite Reality which no one else has ever discovered. Every teacher in the Sunday-school has this privilege of speaking as the oracles of God. And even the utterance of seeming weakness will not be in vain, for no word from God shall be void of power. "Workers together with God" does not mean that God does all and man accomplishes nothing. No, the activity of our wills is not an idle show. God makes our wills the agents of his will. He moves us to touch the button indeed, but our touching the button starts the machinery far away. We are made indispensable factors in the government of the universe; we even now sit with him upon his throne; we push forward the triumphs of his kingdom; we enter into the work and power of Christ.

Let us apply this principle to the larger work of the church in saving the world. The day has long gone by when William Carey could be told by his elders in the ministry: "Young man, when God wants to convert the heathen, he will do it without you or me." Now we see that God has committed the truth to the church, and that Christians are stewards of the mysteries of God, responsible for holding forth the word of life, debtors to both Greeks and barbarians to give them the gospel. God has decreed that every knee shall bow and that every tongue shall confess that Christ is Lord, but that decree will never be executed until God's people also decree to send the men and give the money for missions. We may pray forever that God's kingdom may come and that his will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, but our prayers will not be answered until the church of God puts its will and its wealth into the work of the kingdom as it now puts its will and its wealth into the work of commerce and politics and art. It is not God's will that is lacking for the conversion of the world; our will is the thing that is needed. Let the whole church but for one single day give itself absolutely to the work and service of God, and the millennium would dawn, the Jews would accept their long-rejected Messiah, and the fulness of the Gentiles would be gathered in. The rabbis said: "If Israel repent but for one day, the Messiah will come." Let the church say, "This one thing I do," and the thing will be done—the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.

My whole subject is summed up in the declaration that there is no Christian character or Christian attainment that does not involve and require activity of the human will. We are essentially wills; intellect and affection only furnish the material for action; it is the will that chooses right or wrong. The beginning, middle, and end of religion is in the will. If the Calvinist had only recognized that we are to work out our own salvation, he would not have stopped with his contention that God must work in us to will and to do. And if the Arminian had only recognized that there is no good action of the human will that is not coincident with and dependent upon a working in us of the divine Spirit, he would not have stopped with urging men to work out their own salvation. The pendulum has swung between these two extremes ever since the history of thought began; whole systems of theology have been built now upon divine sovereignty and again upon human freedom; the only rational conclusion is that both are true and must be embraced in our creed, whether we can understand their connection or not. Like the convex and the concave sides of a curve, like the positive and negative poles of the magnet, they are mutually dependent and equally necessary. Because God works in us to will and to do, we are all the more to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

The beginning of Christian character is a decision of the will. I will henceforth serve God, and not live for myself. That is the A B C of religion. The man who says that in his inmost heart is a Christian. Not a developed Christian, but an infantile Christian. He may not yet know how great his sins are, nor how helpless he is; he may not yet know how great Christ is, nor how vast the price Christ has paid for his redemption. But that one act of the will contains in it the germ of Christianity, and it will develop into Christian acting and living. But not of itself. The same Holy Spirit who led the man to this beginning will guarantee that his experience has a middle stage also. Sanctification and perseverance will follow conversion. The will of man will be called on to decide again and again whether it will accept and ratify the will of God. When Dewey took Manila, the Philippines became ours, but the subjection of the outlying provinces has required a good many after-years of care and of fighting. There is no Christian progress except by renewed decisions of the will, new renunciations of offered evil, new graspings of offered good. Character is not a gift, but an achievement, and it is only he that endures to the end that is saved.

It is God who assures the end, even as he assured the beginning and the middle of our experience. Yet immortality and the resurrection body are as much dependent upon our own wills as were our conversion and our growth in grace. To them who *seek* for glory and honor and immortality God gives eternal life. All who want heaven, enough to will heaven, shall have heaven. " In your patience ye shall win your souls," says Christ. By free will you shall get possession of your own being. Losing one's soul is just the opposite, namely, losing one's free will, by disuse renouncing freedom, becoming a victim of habit, nature, circumstance, and this is the cutting off and annihilation of true manhood. A modern novelist has said: " To be in hell is to drift; to be in heaven is to steer." In heathen fable, men were turned into beasts, and even into trees. The story of Circe is a parable of human fate—men may become apes, tigers, or swine. They may lose their higher powers of consciousness and will. All life that is worthy of the name may cease, while still existence of a low animal type is prolonged. We see precisely these results of sin in this world. We have reason to believe that the same laws of development will operate in the world to come. Death is not degeneracy ending in extinction, nor punishment ending in extinction—it is atavism that returns, or tends to return, to the animal type. As normal development is from the brute to man, so abnormal development is from man to the brute. And this is the meaning of the Scripture: "Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish."

I go even further than this, and maintain that Scripture intimates the resurrection body to be the product of the glorified spirit, the effect and expression of the emancipated will. Body is in continual flux, and this continual replacement of old particles by new, while the spirit continues identical and supreme, is evidence that this same spirit may animate an entirely new body in the life to come. Body is plastic in God's hands, and matter is only the manifestation of his mind and will. He who created the present body can create another better suited to the uses of the spirit. The soul that is freed from the thraldom of sin, and has entered into union with God, will attain complete mastery over self and will be endowed with God's power, even over nature, so that it can take to itself the material needed for self-expression just as the rose-bush takes what belongs to it. Soul determines body, and not body soul, as the materialist imagines. As Jesus laid down his life that he might take it again, so the Christian yields up his spirit in death, only that he may win a larger and better life. As Christ raised up the temple of his body on the third day, so the Christian receives power from God to construct for himself a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And the final triumph of the purified will is its subjection of the flesh to the spirit, and its bringing both body and soul in adoring worship to the feet of the Redeemer.

On this Independence Day how solemn are the lessons which this subject teaches us! We are in the midst of a struggle for liberty. Our destiny depends on using our wills, and using them aright. Once to every man, as well as to every nation, comes the moment to decide whether he will be a freeman or a slave. To be a Christian, a son of God, a possessor of immortal life, requires a decision of the will at the beginning, and many subsequent decisions all along our Christian way. But in making that initial decision we shall find that God is already working in us to will and to do, and every after-decision will only convince us more and more that a power not our own has laid hold of us—a power to break the chains of habit and to make us masters of ourselves. Sluggishness and delay will only rivet those chains and make it harder to secure our freedom. On this great day, fraught with so many memories and hopes, let us sign our declaration of independence and be free for evermore!

XXIX

REMOVING MOUNTAINS[1]

The greatest picture of the world is Raphael's picture of the transfiguration. This supreme place has been accorded to it not solely on account of its artistic merits, although these are unquestionably great. It has touched the universal heart rather because it reflects and expresses the subconscious and inarticulate longings of humanity, and with these longings has shown also the true and all-sufficient source of supply. No work of art can be truly great unless it somehow suggests the unseen and eternal. This work more perfectly than any other has in it this greatest of suggestions. The picture of the transfiguration was the last work of Raphael, and it was the consummate flower of his genius. At his funeral in the Pantheon at Rome it was hung over his coffin, as if to intimate that the spiritual and the heavenly had been the chief inspiration of the painter's life and work.

In this picture Raphael has tried to set before us two separate scenes; scenes so far apart in point of space that to put them upon one canvas offends our sense of congruity until we recognize the bond of spiritual connection between them. These scenes are described in quick succession in the seventeenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel. In the lower part of the picture we see the foot of the mountain and the father bringing to the apostles his epileptic and lunatic son. He appeals to them to cast out the demon that possesses him. They do their utmost, but in vain. They confess their impotence, and can only point the despairing father upward to the top of the mountain, whither Jesus their Master has gone. So we raise our eyes to the upper part of the picture. There the Saviour appears transfigured. He is lifted above the earth; his garments shine as the light; Moses and Elijah, the representatives of the law and the prophets, summoned from their heavenly habitations, gaze upward into his face and hold converse with him; all authority in heaven and in earth is delivered into his hand; in him is purity and power, compassion and peace.

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[1] A sermon preached at the dedication of the Calvary Baptist Church, Rochester, N. Y., May 18, 1910.

The two events—the piteous supplication of the father in the lower half of the canvas and the glorification of the Lord in the upper half—are both occurring at the same moment. There is no anachronism in putting them together; it is a sort of anatopism rather; the painter has placed within our view two scenes which no mortal eye could have witnessed at the same time. But he has intimated that moral and religious relations transcend space and time. Raphael had the insight of true genius. His picture is the greatest picture of the world just because he saw beneath the surface of things to the innermost secret of them. The convulsions of the demoniac boy and the agony depicted upon the father's face are only symbols of the suffering and the helplessness of a lost humanity. The Son of man, who is also Son of God, from whom shines forth such radiancy of glory and who draws toward himself the homage of both dead and living saints, is the symbol of Christ's power to redeem and bless. It is a picture of paradise lost and of paradise regained; a picture of humanity under the bondage and curse of sin, and of humanity exalted to be the dwelling-place of God; a picture of the impotence of man and of the power of Christ.

We remember the conversation between Jesus and the disciples, after he had come down from the mountain and had cast out the demon. They innocently asked the Lord: "Why could not we cast him out?" He tells them that it was because of their unbelief. Then follows one of his most remarkable utterances. To him who truly believes, nothing shall be impossible. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall obey you." Here is a great subject suggested, namely, REMOVING MOUNTAINS. I take this for the subject of my sermon. Let us consider it; and, in order to do this, let us ask, first, What mountains are these? secondly, Who removes the mountains? and thirdly, How are the mountains removed?

First, then, *What mountains are these?* I think we must grant that they are not physical mountains of earth and rock, lifting their summits into the sky, and barring one community from another. There was a child who held to this idea. She lived at the foot of a mountain in Germany. She had heard the German proverb: "*Hinter dem Berge sind auch Leute* (Behind the mountain too, there are people living)," and she wished to see them. When she knelt by her bed to say her evening prayer, she prayed the good God during the night to take away the mountain. In the morning she rose, confidently expecting that the mountain would be no longer there. She lifted her curtain, but what was the shock and disappointment to her childish faith to find that the mountain had not budged an inch—there it still stood, and the people behind it were no more visible than before. If she had thought more deeply upon Christ's words and had remembered in what connection he used them, she might have saved herself this disappointment, for nowhere do we find that either Jesus or his apostles removed physical mountains. The connection in which the promise of Christ occurs suggests that it is more spiritual wonders, like the healing of the demoniac, that he has in mind.

We ought not to doubt Christ's power to work in nature, as he did when he stilled the tempest and cursed the barren fig tree. He can answer prayer for rain, when the earth is parched and the cattle are dying. He can answer prayer for healing, by giving new courage to the desponding patient and new skill to the ministering physician. And perhaps we ought to expect more at his hands in these semi-physical ways than we have been accustomed to believe. Still these are not the wonders which he prefers to work, nor are they the wonders most characteristic of the new dispensation. Old Testament miracles were mainly miracles in nature. But Pentecost is the type of New Testament wonders. The regeneration of the human spirit and the filling of it with the fulness of God,—these are greater proofs of divine power than was the walking of Jesus on the sea. In the history of revelation the whole tendency is from the outward to the inward, from the physical to the spiritual. And so, in general, I think we may say that the mountains which Christ has in mind are those seemingly insuperable spiritual obstacles which stand in the way of the setting up or the progress of his kingdom.

There are mountains of sin in ourselves. These separate us from God and hide from us the light of his countenance. Some villages in Switzerland are built in valleys so narrow that the sun does not rise upon them till toward noon, and it has hardly risen before it begins to set. Some Christians in like manner enjoy only brief intervals of God's presence. Great masses of sin hem them in. They know little of communion with Christ. Transgressions long indulged press with mountain weight upon their hearts. Their religion is one of fear more than of love. Like the inhabitants of those Swiss valleys, their faces are pallid and they are afflicted with those peculiar diseases which are incident to deprivation of the sun. How great a revelation it ought to be to such that Christ can come over these mountains of our sins, can remove them, and so can save us from ourselves!

What an illustration of this we have in Augustine, the great church Father! In his early life he was so enamored of his sensual sins that he thought he could never give them up; they were dear to him as life itself, and he had no power to renounce them. But one day he heard the voice: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." He obeyed the voice, he gave himself to Christ, and behold! the mountains were gone, and he learned to live a life of purity such as he had never dreamed to be possible. It was a fulfilment of the words of the prophet: "I am against thee, O destroying mountain, which destroyest all the earth; and I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and will roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain, saith the Lord."

These mountains are not only mountains of sin in ourselves, but also mountains of unbelief in the church. When we have gotten rid of our own transgressions, we find that we have not carried our brethren with us. We are pickets of an advanced guard, a slender outlying column, destined to sure defeat unless we can have reenforcements. Then the great question is whether we can stir up faith and zeal in others. Oh, how mountainous seem the lassitude, the ignorance, the cowardice of the church at large! Gideon would have been disheartened when his thirty-two thousand dwindled down to three hundred, if God had not shown him that it was his pleasure to save Israel not by many, but by few. Jesus would have been disheartened in that period of general doubt and disaffection when the multitude departed from him if he had not seen that one believing and confessing Peter was worth more than the physical presence of all unbelieving Israel. "Will ye also go away?" he said to his disciples. The answer was reassuring: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." He knew that one grain of such faith as this could work wonders, and he answered Peter's confession by saying: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock [the rock of Christian belief and confession] will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Mountains of unbelief in the church? Yes, but faith can overcome them. They told Napoleon that the Alps were in his way, and that he could never conquer Italy. "The Alps?" said he; "there shall be no Alps!" So Christian faith removes the mountains of unbelief in the church which stand in the way of Christ's conquests.

Mountains of sin in ourselves! mountains of unbelief in the church! but these are not all. There are also mountains of opposition in the world. Think of the great world-powers of the past—the civil and ecclesiastical despotisms of the earth. Scripture calls these the "mountains of prey," even as the kingdom of God is called a "holy mountain." There have been great corrupt, devouring monarchies, like the Roman Empire and the Roman hierarchy; heathen religions, with their antiquity, their riches, their pride, their superstition, their diabolism; State churches, thinking they were doing God service by persecuting the saints of God and harrying them out of their kingdoms; Mammon, forbidding missions to India, and silencing preachers of righteousness at home. And yet faith as a grain of mustard-seed has removed all these mountains. We saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven when the power of the Ring was broken in Philadelphia and Cincinnati, and the enemies of municipal reform saw light shining in upon their deeds of darkness. The mountains of opposition in the world have flowed down at Christ's presence, and the last of these mountains shall be made low and shall be made a highway for the chariot wheels of our King, if the church only has the grain of faith of which Jesus speaks. So we answer our first question, What are these mountains? by saying: They are mountains of sin in ourselves, mountains of unbelief in the church, and mountains of opposition in the world.

Our second question is equally important: *Who removes these mountains?* And here the answer is, Christ alone. Only he can remove them who setteth fast the mountains, being girded with power. Only he can remove them, through whom and for whom all things have been created, and in whom all things consist or hold together. Only he can remove them who upholds all things by the word of his power. But all these things are written of Christ. It is he who has weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, and he can thresh the mountains and turn them into fine dust which the slightest breath can blow away. And yet we must remember that all this material imagery represents a spiritual reality. As the mountains to be removed are spiritual obstacles to the progress of Christ's kingdom, so the power that removes them is not physical, but only spiritual power. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, they are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Over against the mountainous obstacles of sin in ourselves, of unbelief in the church, and of opposition in the world, there stands a power greater than they all, the unwearied spiritual energy of the omnipotent Christ. We can do nothing of ourselves, but we can do all things through him who strengtheneth us. Only as we are joined to him and become partakers of his power, can we ever remove mountains.

But we can be joined to Christ in three ways. We can come to know the mind of Christ. He has made provision for this. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." There is a disclosure of his purposes to those who obey him. All who follow the Lamb have some part in his work of loosing the seals and reading the book of God's decrees. Jesus tells us that he has not called us servants, but friends; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth. The implication is that the friend of Christ does have some inkling of the purpose of his Lord. There is a prophetic element in the Christian. Because Christ is in him he is to some extent qualified, as the worldling is not, to understand the meaning of events, to judge what Israel ought to do. If the pastor is a deeply spiritual man, great regard should be paid to his convictions as to the work and policy of the church, as well as to his interpretations of Scripture. Knowing the mind of Christ is very essential in removing the mountains of debt, the mountains of worldliness, the mountains of quarrelsomeness, the mountains of personal pride and ambition and tyranny, which stand in the way of many a church's prosperity.

Removing mountains requires that we not only come to know the mind of Christ, but that we become possessed of the love of Christ. This love of Christ which constrains us is not our love to Christ, for that is weak and faint, nor yet Christ's love to us, for that is still something outside of us, but rather Christ's love in us—Christ's love overflowing into us who are joined to him and possessed by his Spirit. When we tap the infinite reservoir of Christ's love, and get him dwelling and loving within us, then we begin to have something of the power that removes mountains. For only the love of Christ within us can give us eyes to understand the truth or strength to apply it.

We must come to know the mind of Christ; we must be possessed by the love of Christ; but, yet further, we must be surrendered to the will of Christ. He will not remove mountains simply to please us. We shall remove mountains only as we seek to please him. We often seek power, and fail to receive it, simply because we wish to use God, instead of having him use us. We ask and receive not, because we ask amiss, that we may consume it upon our lusts. Prayer is answered only as the essence of it is, "Thy will be done." When we aim only to exalt Christ and to serve his purpose, we have a right to expect that he will fill us with the good pleasure of his goodness, and will complete the work of faith with power. There are doubtless limits which our finiteness imposes on the infinite One. But surely something great must be meant by his assurance, as he referred to the miracles wrought by him during his earthly life: "Greater things than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father."

We have seen what mountains these are that are removed. We have seen who it is that removes mountains, namely, Jesus Christ alone. But there is a last question still unanswered: *How are the mountains removed?* And the answer is, By faith. "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall obey you." And why by faith? Simply because faith is the link of connection between us and Christ.

The beggar's hand that takes the proffered coin has no merit, nor has it any particular power; but it is needed to receive the gift. Faith is the poor hand that lays hold of Christ, the treasure of the soul. . . The coupling that binds the train to the locomotive seems a very insignificant thing, and it surely has in itself no power to draw the train. Yet without it the locomotive would be useless and the cars would stand idly on the track. Faith is the coupling that unites us to Jesus Christ, and gives us the benefit of all his life and power. Of itself it accomplishes nothing; joining us to Christ, it enables us to do all that Christ himself could do, so that to faith nothing is impossible. . . The trolley, that connects the car with the wire and the electric current and the dynamo at the power-house, has no power of its own; but, as a conductor of power, it is indispensable. Faith is the trolley that brings us into living connection with Jesus Christ, who is the head of all principalities and power, and who through this faith communicates his power to us. We may be cold and dark and immovable as a car upon the track on a winter's night. Put up the trolley of faith, and the cold, dark, dead Christian shows warmth and glow, and begins once more to move on in the Christian way; nay, he can even make the mountains as if they were not, and can ride over them as if they were a plain.

Notice here that the divine agency does not exclude the human. We must pray and we must work, if the mountains are to be made low. "The sword of the Lord?" Yes; but "the sword of Gideon," also. Nor does the divine agency all go before the human. At times we must go before God. Saying to this mountain, "Be thou removed," surely precedes the removal. The rolling away of the stone on the part of the disciples precedes the putting forth of Christ's power in the raising of Lazarus from the dead. At times we must follow God. Moses must smite the rock just where and just as often as God bids him. Joshua must proceed in his work of conquering Palestine just as fast and as far as the Captain of the Lord's host leads the way.

The truth is that the faith that removes mountains is the gift of God. To say that the divine agency does not exclude the human, and to say that it does not all go before the human, is to say only a part of the truth. The more comprehensive doctrine is that the divine agency works in the human. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is already God that worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure. The very willing and working are evidences of the presence of him who removes the mountains. The grain of mustard-seed is the least of all seeds, but it has in it the life and power of the omnipresent God. And the grain of mustard-seed is the symbol of faith. The least of it is precious, for it joins the Christian to Christ, and is proof that Christ is his, and that with Christ all things are his also. Have you this faith? Then you are blessed. You shall be more than conqueror through him that loves you; and as for the mountain that stands in your way, you may hear as did one of old: "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."

So we have seen what mountains these are, namely, mountains of sin in ourselves, mountains of unbelief in the church, mountains of opposition in the world; who it is that removes the mountains, namely, Christ alone, and he who has come to know the mind of Christ, to be possessed of his love, and to be surrendered to his will; how the mountains are to be removed, namely, by the faith that joins us to Christ and makes us partakers of his life and power.

There are two practical remarks with which I may close this sermon. The first of them is this: It is the duty of every Christian to remove *some* mountains. And that for the reason that there are some things which God has declared it to be his will that we should remove. Surely this is true of the mountain of our own sin. This is the will of God, even our sanctification, and every obstacle in ourselves that stands in the way can be made to vanish, if we will only have faith in God. With regard to our weakness and unbelief, it is equally true that the removal of them is a duty. We may be as unequal to the task as was that man with the withered hand. Yet it is ours to stretch forth the hand, withered as it is, and in so doing God will give strength and make it whole.

After we have done one duty of this sort, we shall find ourselves face to face with another; for, as George Eliot has said, the reward of a duty done is the power to do another. The Christian shall be led on from strength to strength, until his faith is equal to great exigencies. He shall know that wrestling of Jacob which turns him into an Israel, so that he has power with God and man and prevails. There is an agony of supplication in which we are conscious that it is not we alone who are praying, but that the Holy Spirit makes intercession with us with groanings that cannot be uttered. There is a faith, born of such conflicts, which is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen, that grasps the promised good, knows it is God's will to grant it, and so seizes the triumph from afar. That faith we cannot summon up by any art or effort of ours; it is the gift of God. But they who live nearest to God are most apt to receive it. The sluggish and disobedient Christian may know nothing of it. The aged saint who, like Simeon and Anna of old, can only pray and wait, may yet in the closet wield a power greater than that of the kings of the earth; yes, he may say to this mountain, " Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall obey." When the secret things are revealed at last, it shall be found that the word that broke the power of Rome, and that opened China to the gospel, and that brought the wealth of the world into Christ's treasury, was not the word of any earthly potentate or millionaire, but rather the word of some humble believer, who joined himself to Christ and made himself possessor of Christ's power. We may be very far as yet from having such faith as this. But we can at least give ourselves to Christ and begin by removing the mountain of sin and unbelief that lies right before us.

And the last remark is this: *What* mountains are to be removed we may leave to God. Wherein we are otherwise minded than he would approve, he will himself reveal to us. He will show us what we are to do. "If we abide in him, and his words abide in us, we shall ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us." It is a great thing to be thus used by God—the greatest honor, indeed, that can be given to a mortal. Man is great only as he receives God, and faith is this reception of God. We are very weak and insignificant in ourselves. Only as God enters into us and possesses us have we any dignity in the creation. Since faith is the one organ for receiving Christ into our souls, we are great just so far and only so far as we are great believers. Let this then be our ambition, to be great in the sight of the Lord, to be rationally and essentially great, by having great faith. This is the one need of the individual Christian, of the ministers of Christ, and of the members of the Christian church, and our one prayer should be: "Lord, increase our faith!"

For before this faith every mountainous obstacle that stands in the way of Christ's cause shall disappear; by conversion or by death the wicked who oppose the truth shall be removed; the falsehood and delusion which prevent the access of truth shall vanish like mists before the sun. Faith may not be the greatest of the Christian graces, but it is certainly the first, and it opens the way for all the others. True it is that, if I have all faith so as to remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing. But this is only a hypothetical case. The true faith that removes mountains is not separated from love; it rather works by love, and purifies the heart. And, therefore, faith is God's measure of a man, and we are bidden "not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to each man a measure of faith."

Yet, after all, Christ himself is our best model. It was a great day for me when I saw for the first time that Christ is the leader and example, as well as the perfecter, of faith, and that it is by looking to him as our pattern that we are to run our race and to win our crown. He walked by faith, and not by sight. It was because his faith never failed that he was enabled to work his miracles. He could walk the waves of the sea, could multiply the loaves, and could raise the dead, because he was consciously at one with the mind and heart and purpose of God. As his faith joined him to the Father, so our faith may join us to him. As his faith endowed him with the power of God, so our faith may endue us with the power of Christ.

In Raphael's picture of the transfiguration the mountain is removed. So far as the spectator is concerned, the disciples and Christ are brought together. What had been their difficulty in curing the lunatic boy? They were not in close touch with Christ. The mountain was in their way. Raphael has shown what faith can do to cast the mountain into the sea, and to make it as if it were not. I am not sure that this mountain which had been between him and his disciples did not suggest to our Lord the words of his great promise. There *is* no mountain but the mountain that separates us from Christ. "With him," says Spurgeon, "I can create a world. Without him I can do absolutely nothing."

The least faith is precious, because it brings us into connection with him who is the source of all life and energy. But there are kinds of faith and degrees of faith. For every member of Christ's church I would ask three gifts: First, that his faith fail not; secondly, that his faith may continually grow; thirdly, that his faith may remove mountains—the mountains of sin in his own heart, the mountains of unbelief in the church, the mountains of opposition in the world; but, above all, that one mountain that includes them all, the mountain of separation from Christ.

XXX

CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN[1]

King James' version translated this text in a different way. There it reads: " Our conversation is in heaven." But the word " conversation " meant more than " discourse," or " interchange of talk "; it meant " the whole manner of life," so that the verse might have read: " Our whole manner of life is in heaven." Even this, however, does not fully express the meaning of the original. That contains a reference to political relations—relations to the government or State. Our Revised version has in the margin the word " commonwealth," but, better still, puts into the text the word " citizenship," so that it reads: " Our citizenship is in heaven."

The Philippians, to whom Paul wrote, prided themselves on their Roman citizenship. They possessed the *jus Italicum,* with all its privileges. Rome had conquered them, but then it had made them Romans, and to be a Roman was to be greater than a king. Peace, order, stability, security for life and property, belonged to those who were citizens of Rome. Paul found in his Roman citizenship no small protection. It brought the magistrates to his feet after his unjust scourging and imprisonment, and the memory of their discomfiture probably saved the infant church in Philippi from persecution. Paul's Roman citizenship afterward procured his own release from scourging at Jerusalem, and it made possible his final appeal to Cæsar.

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[1] A sermon preached in the Congregational Church, Canandaigua, N. Y., on the text, Phil. 3: 20: " Our citizenship is in heaven," May 26, 1907.

Paul valued his earthly citizenship, and he made the most of it. But then he perceived its limitations. It had brought him to Rome, but thus far only to a Roman prison. He was waiting for the emperor's decision. An emperor like Nero was by no means a just judge. Extortion and oppression were rife under his administration. The spoils of the provinces and the slaves brought in from subjugated lands furnished the means of unprecedented corruption. Nero used his power not in the interest of his subjects, but only to gratify a preternatural vanity and to minister to the basest pleasures. The splendors of Roman rule did not prevent Vergil from longing for a return of the golden age, nor did they blind our apostle to the need of another kingdom of genuine righteousness and peace and joy. Indeed, we may say that the very bars of Paul's dungeon and the chain which bound him to the soldier by his side suggested to him another commonwealth and another citizenship in which he gloried far more than he gloried in the commonwealth and citizenship of Rome. "Our citizenship," he says, "is in heaven." Let us ask for a moment how this commonwealth is constituted, in what sense it is in heaven, and what citizenship in it involves.

First, then, as to the constitution of this commonwealth. Evidently the most important thing to be observed is that there is a king. *"Ohne Kaiser, kein Reich"* was the maxim of Bismarck: "Without an emperor there can be no empire." This is especially true of the heavenly kingdom. As well think of a solar system without a sun, as think of a heavenly citizenship without ruler or lord. And who this ruler and lord is, Paul learned on the way to Damascus, when a light shone upon him above the brightness of the sun, and the glory of God streamed forth from the face of Jesus Christ. From that moment the apostle saw in Christ God revealed. The crucified Saviour was the truest manifestation of the Father, and was exalted to be Lord of all. Here was the King of kings and Lord of lords, lifted above all the limitations of space and time, filling and governing the whole universe. Rome is great; but, after all, its empire is confined to this earth and to the present time. Christ's empire embraces all the worlds and all the ages. The empire of Cæsar is nothing to the empire of Christ.

Wherever there is a king there is also a law, and the law requires allegiance or conformity to the will of the sovereign. The law of Christ's kingdom is a law of righteousness, far more binding than that of Nero. It is a law of love, very different from the externalism and compulsion of the law of Moses. It is the law of a King who does not, like Nero, hold himself aloof in order to be served by others, but who comes down to the low estate of his subjects, to feel for them and to suffer with them. When the Scripture says, "He ascended," what does it mean, "but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth"? And now he who came down so low, to save us, has "ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things." He is everywhere present, everywhere working, everywhere sympathizing, everywhere accessible, everywhere serving, binding together the highest and the lowest rounds of the social ladder, seating each subject with himself upon his throne, and so constituting "one kingdom, joy, and union without end." And the only law of his kingdom is that we join ourselves to him, receive his Spirit, live his life, seek his ends, know him ourselves, and make him known to others. This law is a law of liberty, because it is accompanied by power to obey. The commandment is no longer grievous, because it presupposes love, and the service of love is perfect freedom. Heaven is the reign of God in Christ. It is primarily an allegiance, an attitude of soul, a new and normal relation of man to the things of the Spirit. When Paul cried: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" he recognized Christ's supreme authority and gladly submitted himself to it. He became a citizen of heaven when he surrendered himself to Christ and gave himself to Christ's service.

Heaven implies a King and an allegiance, but it also implies a holy society. When we come out from the world and begin to serve Christ, we are not left orphans. By his Spirit Christ himself comes to us, and this presence of Christ and communion with Christ is the greatest privilege of the kingdom. Stephen at his martyrdom prayed to Christ. The early church called upon the name of the Lord, and the Lord was Christ. Paul says that Christ is our life, and he cannot conceive of a Christian life separated from the Saviour. There is no indication of declension from New Testament doctrine or experience more marked and more dangerous than the counting of our Lord Jesus as a mere historical personage who lived and died eighteen hundred years ago, but who has no present existence or influence. Not the dead Christ of the crucifix, but the living Christ, the present Christ, the divine Christ, is the Christ of our commonwealth, and to many a believer the discovery that Christ is still alive, accessible, omnipotent, is the beginning of a new and blessed experience.

We are citizens of heaven. But there are other citizens besides ourselves. Indeed, we are bound not only to love God, but to love our neighbor also. It is no narrow patriotism that is enjoined upon us. To be citizens of heaven is to have membership in a grander political structure than that of Israel or of the Roman Empire. If Paul prided himself on being a free-born citizen of Tarsus, no mean city, he gloried much more in being a freeman in God's kingdom; nay, one of the sons of the heavenly King. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that we are come " to God the Judge of all," and " to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant," but he also tells us that we are come " to innumerable hosts of angels, the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven," and " to the spirits of just men made perfect." It is the goodly fellowship of all who in time and in eternity love and serve the Lord. The Christ who fills all in all is not only the life of the church in all lands and ages, but he is also the light that lighteth every man, so that every spark of truth in heathendom as well as in Christendom is but a scintillation from his fire, and citizenship in his kingdom binds Paul and binds us to go out to the ends of the earth and to offer its privileges to the whole race of man.

So much with regard to the constitution of this new commonwealth of which Paul speaks. It implies a King, an allegiance, a society. Now, in the second place, what is meant when it is said to be "in heaven"? Is heaven a country? This figure of speech is certainly used in Scripture. The prophet spoke of "the land that is very far off," and the saints are said to "desire a better country, that is, a heavenly." God is said to have "prepared for them a city." Abraham went out from Ur of the Chaldees, "not knowing whither he went," "for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." In the Isle of Patmos John "saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." I would not deny that heaven may be a place. The glorified body of our risen Lord would seem to need place for its manifestation. Local attachments are strong with us, and we can hardly conceive of a home for the spirit that is without them. But how plain it is that home means inward content, far more than it means outward surroundings! There can be no true home for the restless and guilty soul. The greatest beauties of nature are hidden from the selfish and despairing. John Milton said truly:

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

Heaven is primarily a state. It is a matter of disposition, not of location. If heaven is in any sense a place, it is only that the outward may correspond to the inward, only that environment may correspond to character. But God has made us with these finite longings, and that is the pledge that he will satisfy them. Since Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us, we may believe that in the many mansions of the Father's house we shall find the true home of the soul. Let us leave the future to God, assured that "he who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," shall "also with him freely give us all things."

So too, with regard to the enjoyments of heaven. We read of singing and worship and rest and companionship. The tree of life with its twelve manner of fruits grows by the side of the ever-flowing river, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. I sympathize with that poor girl of whom the author of "The Gates Ajar" tells us. She had an exquisite love for music, but her taste found little gratification here. She was assured that she should have a piano in heaven. I do not doubt that there was essential truth in that assurance. The longing of the soul would be fully satisfied, if not by a piano, then by something of which earthly harmonies are only faint hints and symbols. There are only two things absolutely needed to make heaven. One is righteousness, and the other is love. We look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Freedom from sin within and freedom from sin without—there can be no heaven apart from this. And this means the reign of love. "Love is the only good in the world," says Robert Browning; and, if he means holy love, his words are true. But consider how entirely inward these gifts of the Spirit are! Our Saviour utters his beatitudes not upon riches or power or pleasure, but upon the graces of the heart. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted." And this answers to our own experience. Our times of true blessedness have been the quiet hours in which we were assured of sins forgiven, of sincere purpose to do right, of unselfish love for others, of the favor and presence of God.

Our Lord Jesus shows us in his own life the inwardness of this heavenly commonwealth. How completely independent he is of all earthly conditions! He has not where to lay his head; yet he is Lord of all. He walks our narrow ways, yet he is in the bosom of the Father. He is the Son of man, yet the Son of man who is in heaven. He does always what pleases the Father; his meat and drink are to do the Father's will; he is not alone, for the Father is with him; he and the Father are one. Heaven cannot be far away if Jesus is in heaven, even while here on earth. His heaven consists in communion with God, likeness to God, and the doing of God's will. And his life shows us what it is to be a citizen of heaven.

We mistake too, when we regard heaven as altogether unrealized as yet, or as existing only in the future. You notice that the apostle uses the present tense: "Our citizenship *is* in heaven"; "We are *come* unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." We have been already admitted into it. Heaven is something present, as well as something yet to come. There is a spiritual world. It is the real world. The world of sense is only the symbol of it. We all feel this at times. Things seen and temporal appear delusive and vain. The unseen and eternal looms up as the only worthy object of contemplation or ambition. In Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," he speaks of:

Moments when he feels he cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to himself
Nor the high God a vision.

And in 1869 the poet wrote: "Yes, it is true that there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me; when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision; God and the spiritual is the real; it belongs to me more than the hand and the foot. You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of my existence—I could believe you; but you never, never can convince me that the *I* is not an eternal reality, and that the spiritual is not the true and real part of me." This is not mere poetry,—it is insight into truth and into the nature of things. The ideal world, of which all things visible are but the shadow and partial manifestation, this has been the discovery and revelation of all true philosophy from the days of Plato down.

Regeneration by the Spirit of God opens our eyes to it. I do not mean that unregenerate men have no glimpses of it, for I believe that the Spirit of God has many ways of preparatory working, and that many a poet and seer has caught some rays of the true light that lighteth every man, even though that light has shined for the most part in the midst of darkness. But there is a naturalization into this kingdom of the Spirit, a new birth into the world of spiritual realities, just as there was a first birth into the sensible and material world, and "except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." What a change that new birth of the Spirit makes in us! It is somewhat like the change from childhood to manhood. How utterly unable is the child to understand the plans and pursuits of the father! To the child the world of appetite and of play is all-engrossing; how his father can interest himself so long at the desk with those books passes his comprehension. But there comes a time when food and play take their proper place as means rather than ends; the child breathes a larger air, and has nobler ambitions; he has become a man, and has put away childish things. In a similar manner God's regenerating Spirit opens to the child of larger growth a new spiritual world. To those whose lower nature was supreme he shows the ignominy of a life in which appetite rules; the vanity of the brief and ever-growing thirst for property and power; the corroding and remorseful end of those who are self-centered and determined to make the universe and even God himself revolve around them. To the truly converted there appears a new world of love and of service. Old things have passed away; all things have become new. The present still fetters them, but they recognize themselves as creatures of eternity. Like God, they are no longer subject to the law of space and time. Believing in God, as he is revealed in Jesus Christ, they already have eternal life.

I am quite aware that this description of a heavenly citizenship may seem vague and unsubstantial to those whose only standards of judgment are external and material. I grant that only a spiritual experience can enable us to understand spiritual things. But I appeal to that spiritual experience in the Christian, and I solemnly assure those who are yet blind to these heavenly realities that Christ can and will reveal them to all who sincerely ask him. And if this phenomenal world that environs us seems still necessary to our existence both here and hereafter, let me remind you that matter is plastic in Christ's hands, and that he can by the word of his power create for us whatever bodily vehicle or outward environment may be needed for the education of our spirits and the satisfaction of our best desires. Soul determines body, and not body soul, as the materialist imagines. The soul in union with God will be possessed of the power of God. Both the body which we inhabit and that larger body, the world in which we dwell, are only manifestations of God's mind and will. So we believe in Jesus and the resurrection.

Sin-blighted as we are, we too,
  The reasoning sons of men,
From one oblivious winter called,
  Shall rise and breathe again,
And in eternal summer lose
  Our threescore years and ten.

To humbleness of mind descends
  This prescience from on high,
The faith that elevates the just
  Before and when they die,
And makes each soul a separate heaven,
  A court for Deity.

So we come, in the third place, to define more exactly what this heavenly citizenship involves. To be a citizen of heaven is to have the rights of a citizen. As Paul claimed his rights as a citizen of Rome and took a certain pride in them, so we who belong to the heavenly kingdom may glory that we are citizens of heaven. Our new King and his laws, his atoning sacrifice and his renewing Spirit, give us security, protection, society, honor. We have been presented with the freedom of the City of God. The whole eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is intended to show the present and eternal blessedness of those who have entered the heavenly kingdom. Neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To be a citizen of heaven is to have duties as well as rights. Paul's exhortation to the Philippians to "walk worthily" should be translated: "Behave as citizens, worthily of the gospel of Christ"; in other words, show in all your earthly relations that you belong to the heavenly kingdom; live according to God's laws; so, as far as in you lies, turn earth into heaven. Dante, in his "Divine Comedy," caught the substance of the truth when he made the angels who in heaven are nearest to God, to be engaged at the same time in lowly ministration to the needy on earth. Dante only interpreted Jesus' words: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." To be a citizen of heaven, therefore, implies active service to every good cause, the betterment of all social conditions, the sending of the gospel to the heathen nations, the effort to bring to the knowledge of the truth our families, our communities, and all mankind. To be a citizen of heaven is, like Christ, to realize heaven in our own souls, and then to establish it outside of us by going about and doing good.

For heaven, I repeat, is nothing but the reign of God. Where God reigns, there is heaven. It is only sin within us and sin outside of us that prevents us even here from realizing it. We ourselves have to be born anew in order to see heaven,—that is the first requisition. But there is a second—other people must also be born anew, in order that the soul may have a proper habitat and a proper society. We need a new body and a new world. But these shall surely come. "Behold, I make all things new"—that is the promise of the future. Here we are like fish out of water, or like birds of broken wing. And because the outward does not yet correspond to the inward, we feel like strangers and pilgrims; we have no continuing city; we seek one to come; we have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. At times the longing for the sinless and perfect state becomes overpowering, and we sing:

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
  Stand dressed in living green;
So to the Jews fair Canaan stood
  While Jordan rolled between.

Could we but stand where Moses stood
  And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream nor death's cold flood
  Should fright us from the shore.

Let us listen to the apostle while he assures us of the future: " For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. . . For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For in hope were we saved: but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Notice that word " first-fruits." We have the heavenly kingdom within as pledge of the perfect triumph of the kingdom outside of us, just as the few early ears of corn are pledge of the abounding harvest that is to follow. " For our citizenship is in heaven: whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself." As the Philippian citizen looked to Rome for protection, so the Christian citizen may look to heaven for help, in every time of need. This is the true " City of God," of which Augustine wrote.

The only guarantee of immortality to any man is the atoning death and the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. The only proof of a future heaven is the present heaven constituted by the indwelling of Christ in his own soul. The citizen of heaven carries his credentials with him. His passport is God's writing upon his heart. The assurance that heaven shall be ours is not to be found in an other-worldliness which ignores the present, but in the effort to make the heaven within shed its light abroad and so transform the earth into its likeness. Archimedes declared that, if he could only find a place to stand, he could move the whole world. Christianity furnishes the place, the *pou sto* in its doctrine of the heavenly citizenship. We are to "seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God." But we are to "lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven," by using our worldly possessions here in such way as to make a little heaven below for those who are not so well off as we are. It is "he that doeth the will of God" that "abideth forever"; and, if we are always ready, we shall be ready when Jesus comes.

A pious Scotchman was once asked whether he ever expected to reach heaven. He replied: "Why, mon, I live there noo." And that is the best evidence. The present possession of Christ and of the gifts of his Spirit is the earnest of our future inheritance. Faith is "assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." Let us not postpone our heaven to the far future, but take it now. Let us lay hold of Christ by faith, and with Christ all things—heaven included—shall be a present possession. The world passes away, and the desire for it, but he that doeth the will of God abides forever. Shakespeare says well that:

> Like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,

And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

And John Henry Newman:

Then what this world to thee, my heart?
Its gifts nor feed thee, nor can bless;
Thou hast no owner's part in all its fleetingness.

And the Scripture urges the transientness of all earthly things as a reason for cultivating the things of the spirit: " Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." We were made to be citizens of heaven. Let us claim our inheritance and rejoice in it. For heaven here insures heaven hereafter.

Jesus, in mercy bring us
  To that dear land of rest,
Who art, with God the Father
  And Spirit, ever blest!

XXXI

FEAR IN RELIGION[1]

And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. (Luke 12:4, 5.)

CLEARLY this is not an exhortation to reverence or filial fear, but to the fear of God's anger. For this reason it is often received with prejudice and opposition. Many people think it a base thing to be moved by fear at all. They will not believe in a religion that appeals to fear. They fancy that Christianity is based only on men's fears, and therefore they reject it. All these erroneous notions will be set right if we once consider the true office of fear and its proper place as a motive in religion. I propose to show three things: First, that fear is recognized as a rational and salutary emotion in common affairs of life; secondly, that fear must always be present in religion so long as there is sin; and thirdly, that Christianity uses fear only to insure our escape from sin, and so to make possible the exclusive reign of love.

First, then, I would have you notice that *fear is everywhere recognized as a rational and salutary emo-*

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[1] A sermon preached in Sage Chapel, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., March, 1898.

tion. All the prejudice which exists against it arises from confounding fear with a certain other allied but very distinct emotion. There is an emotion which distracts and unmans, even if it does not absolutely paralyze the soul. But this emotion is not properly fear,—it is fright or terror. Terror is indeed a sign of weakness and a source of weakness. It is a partial abdication of reason and submission to the wild sway of imagination. Deliberation and judicious action are impossible while terror reigns. But it is not so with fear. Fear is the calm recognition of danger, together with such apprehension of it and shrinking from it as induce effort to escape. Here is a crowded concert-hall. In the midst of the performance, a messenger whispers to the conductor. He taps with his baton. In an instant the instruments are hushed, and the leader announces in a clear voice that a fire has just broken out in the building, and that while there is no immediate danger it is advisable for the audience quietly but at once to withdraw. Here is every care taken to prevent panic, but at the same time every effort to inspire rational fear. It is unworthy a man under such circumstances to be overcome with terror, but no one of all that audience feels that it is beneath him to fear. No man compromises his dignity or shows that he is a coward, when he is " moved by fear " to save his life.

We shall see this more plainly if we consider what provision God has made for fear in our constitution and training. Fear begins as an instinct—a self-preserving instinct implanted in our nature. The little child shrinks from strange faces and from the darkness whose secrets it knows nothing of. There are involuntary movements of the body by which we preserve ourselves from danger; the eyelids suddenly close when some foreign substance threatens to enter; we start back when we find ourselves all at once on the edge of a precipice. Some of these sudden fears we outgrow, but not so with all. Reason comes in to justify many of them. "The burnt child," we say, "dreads the fire." Fear serves to keep the child from future danger. And so, all through life, experience, which is little more than our justified and systematized fears, guards us against accident and needless exposures. A large part of the creations of human art and wisdom are the products and results of rational fear. Laws and courts and prisons are possible only where apprehension exists of disorder and violence and crime. Insurance companies are built up upon men's fears of fire and accident and death. Physicians live and work because men fear disease and pain. All these things show how fear secures and protects us. If there were no such thing as fear, we should run headlong upon a thousand mischiefs which might prove our ruin. Many a man is kept from death by nothing but the fear of death. Amid the multitudinous ills and burdens of life, the mass of men would rush to suicide by thousands and tens of thousands, and the world itself would be depopulated if this fear of death did not sound out like an alarm-bell upon the rocks of that solemn shore, to warn these storm-driven barks of shipwreck for eternity, and so turn them back from their fancied refuge of self-destruction.

Since fear is an instinct of our nature and is backed up by sound reason, he who never takes counsel of his fears is false to nature and to reason too. To be influenced by the motive of fear is a very different thing from cowardice. A reasonable fear, that is, a fear proportioned to the danger, and prompting efforts to escape, is in worldly matters a stimulus to the highest endeavor. It is not debasing, but elevating. It is not weak and unmanly, but one of the chief supports of energy and courage. A reasonable fear is not despair, any more than it is terror. It is perfectly consistent with hope that danger may be averted and difficulty overcome. True fear simply leads a man to acknowledge the danger and face the difficulty; without fear he might shut his eyes and delay till escape was hopeless. A true fear of the evil of disunion and the triumph of rebellion moved the North a few years ago to pour forth money by the thousand million, and the lives of her sons by the hundred thousand, and the world does not think it cowardly that we spent so much to save our nationality. On the contrary, the *absence* of all fear, when reason for fear exists, is the weak and unmanly thing. We do not call it courage, but recklessness, and we attribute it either to gross ignorance or to moral insensibility. The youthful volunteer may rush into battle in a sort of wild intoxication, but he is the first to run when the battle turns against him; the veteran who knows how to hold his ground all through the adverse day is the man whose experience has made him fear, and whose fear has added caution to his valor. And so let a tremendous danger menace the family or the State, and it is not he who recks not that you call the wisest and the strongest man, but rather he whose brows show grave apprehension of the peril, and whose every movement evinces that mind and heart are busy in devising the means to meet it.

Allowing then that, in common affairs of life, there is place and use for fear, let us ask whether there is any good reason for refusing it influence in religion. I maintain, as the second thought of the subject, that *so long as there is a possibility of sin, there must exist in religion, and there ought to exist, this element of fear.* And this is little more than to say that, so long as there is anything to fear, men ought to fear, and that they cannot properly dispense with the emotion so long as there is anything to call it forth. We know that God has ordained fear in secular concerns in order that we may provide for our safety. Now, allowing for the moment that there is such a thing as peril for the soul, then certain things follow of necessity. First, that such danger is a more serious thing than danger of the body. Secondly, that when God has done so much to inspire salutary fear of physical death, we may expect him to give far more solemn warnings, and to awaken in us far more anxious alarms with regard to eternal death. And thirdly, that if there be such a thing as eternal death and God has declared it to us, then we are bound in reason to fear this more than we fear any earthly or transient evil.

Is there anything to fear, then?—that is the question. I answer, there is much to fear. It is not a groundless fear to which religion binds us, but a rational and well-founded fear. The Scriptures show us just what the reason is for fear. The reason lies in the fact of sin. God is a God of infinite moral purity. Sin is impurity and a standing insult to his holiness. God is a God of perfectly disinterested benevolence. Sin is selfishness and a blot upon the fair creation of his hands. And just in proportion to the spotless whiteness of God's moral excellence and the infinite energy of his love is his hatred of men's unholiness and self-seeking. In justice to himself and in justice to his unfallen creation, he must turn away from sin and mark it with his abhorrence. God's love is not an easy good nature that is indifferent to all moral relations, but a love for all that is good and pure and true, and such a love as this involves in its very nature an intensity of indignation against falsehood and corruption and evil. The very love of God makes him a consuming fire to all iniquity. And it punishes too. Not only the laws of our being punish us, but God punishes us. God is in all the laws of nature, expressing his mind and will; but over and beyond all law stands the living God, whose wrath transcends all finite expressions of it, and into whose hand it is a fearful thing to fall. When we think of the unchanging holiness of God and of the infinite reach of his arm of power, we do not wonder at Moses. Moses did not tremble when he stood before the haughty Pharaoh. But when he came to stand before God, in the deep consciousness of his sinfulness; he cried: "I exceedingly fear and quake."

I am well aware that a future of physical torment has ceased to impress this generation. A celebrated writer on psychology has said that we have not as great an appetite for retribution as our fathers had. This may be due to a decline in moral earnestness. I am willing to grant that the hell of which our Saviour speaks is in its essence an evil state of the soul. If it is a place at all, it is only that environment may correspond to character. But no one who has had much experience of life, no one who has sounded the depths of his own nature, needs to be told that insatiable desire and the consciousness of guilt can make a hell compared with which mere outward flame would be coolness and peace. The fire and the brimstone are not without, but within. Nero, shrieking through the halls of his golden house; Dimmesdale, in the "Scarlet Letter," exposing himself in the storm to heaven's thunderbolts; these are the historical and the ideal types, respectively, of the remorse that consumes the soul of the sinner when the Spirit of God has awakened him to see the nature of his sin. This is the worm that never dies and the fire that is not quenched; and this reaction of our nature is the work of him that made the nature and that manifests himself in it. Just so long and so far then as we are sinners, there is ground for fearing him who hates and punishes sin. Why should we not fear? It is the creature's declaration that he is independent of his Creator; it is the directest antagonism to everything that there is in God; all the forces of God's being and all the resources of God's government are arrayed against it. The iron ore thrust into the blast-furnace must burn there till the dross is separated and the metal is left pure; the white flame pierces to every part of it, and will not be satisfied till all is like itself. So God's holiness is the eternal enemy of everything that is unholy in the universe; like intense fire, it burns against sin; there is no cessation of his anger, and cannot be, until sin is separated and the soul is holy, even as God is holy.

Make way then, if you will, with the hell of external physical inflictions, still the hell of inward torture and remorse remains to every man who is unlike God in moral character, and who enters into controversy with his Maker. So long as he cannot escape from himself or from God, the whole system of things must be a blast-furnace to reduce and subdue his refractory soul. Fear in religion, then, is not the offspring of mere imagination; it is not based upon a false view of the soul's relation to God. So long as sin exists, or the possibility of sin, fear is the natural and rational and irresistible prompting of the soul to escape from the inflictions of God's anger. It has its cause and foundation not simply in the nature of man, but in the nature of God. And, therefore, the progress of ages and the change of dispensations does not affect it. Fear belongs to the New Testament as well as to the Old. It is the greatest mistake to call the Old Testament a dispensation of fear only, while we call the New Testament a dispensation only of love. The truth is that fear and love both had place in the Old as they have in the New. The only difference is that under the old dispensation men did not know so much of God's nature or of the nature of sin as they do under the new, and, therefore, they could not know so much either of the greatness of God's wrath or of the greatness of his mercy. As the Old Testament saints did not have a clear view of the Cross, so they were not permitted to see the depths of the abyss from which the Cross was to save them. But with the full revelation of the way of escape through Jesus Christ, we have also the revelation of the eternal death from which we need to fly. Think of this, you who hold that religion is all love, and that fear passed away like a nightmare with the darkness of antiquity. Remember that while the New Testament presents to us a crucified and almighty Saviour, it also opens to us for the first time the horrors of everlasting banishment from God. While the New Testament shows us more plainly what we have to hope, it also shows us more plainly what we have to fear. It emphasizes not only the goodness of God, but the guilt of sin. It not only reveals untold depths of mercy in the Cross, but it also speaks of sorer punishments and deeper condemnations. No prophet or lawgiver of Israel ever uttered such words of threatening as fell from Jesus' lips. The same voice that said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," uttered the warning of the text: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."

So long as sin exists, then, or the possibility of sinning against God, fear is a rational and proper emotion, and every argument in favor of the right influence of fear in worldly affairs applies with infinitely greater force to the affairs of the soul. But I should leave an altogether wrong impression if I stopped here. Fear is not an end in itself, but a means to a higher end. It is not a good in itself, for "fear hath torment," but it is a necessary stepping-stone to that which *is* really good. It is not the permanent and ultimate thing which God desires in us, but only a preliminary to the state of mind and heart which will fully meet his will. Notice, then, in the third place, that *Christianity makes use of fear only as a preparatory discipline which conducts at last to the exclusive reign of love.* Many things are useful as means which would never be sought as ends. The nauseous draught which the physician prescribes would never be taken for the pleasure of it—yet the patient may gladly drink it for the sake of the health that is to come thereby. Why is it that you rejoice to see the fear of temporal ruin taking possession of that reckless and dissipated young man? Certainly not because you love to see him in pain, but because it gives evidence that he is reflecting on his ways and feels the impulse to turn from them. So the Christian delights to hear the first acknowledgment of sin and need and conscious danger on the part of the worldly man—not because he takes pleasure in another's distress, but because he knows that this apprehension and sorrow is the needful precursor of any solid peace and joy. In other words, until he appreciates the terrors of the world to come, he will not flee from them nor lay hold of the hopes set before him in the gospel. Only when he sees how much sin and its consequences are to be feared, can he understand the greatness of God's mercy in providing a deliverance. Fear is good, not for what it is in itself, but because it leads to the renouncing of sin, the acceptance of Christ, and the supreme dominion of love in the heart.

Mark the steps of this process. See how fear prepares the way for love in the case of thousands who, without its influence, would never know the love of God at all. Observe how it breaks those fetters that hold the soul fast bound, I mean the attractiveness of sin and the shrinking which the sinner feels as he looks forward to a religious life. When pleasure sings her siren-song, and every nerve quivers with the thrill of strong temptation, nothing but the harsh voice of fear can break the spell and free the captive. Men absorb themselves in the pursuit of riches or personal advancement until they are deaf to the softer and gentler voices of friendship, and much more deaf to the entreaties of heavenly mercy. Then nothing but the gathering clouds and forked lightnings and crashing thunders of God's wrath can awake them to their peril and induce them to seek a refuge for their souls. How many petty fears fetter men when the claims of God are presented to them—their own weakness, the irksomeness of duty, the opposition and ridicule of others! What can do away with these fears but the more dreadful fear of meeting the living God as an angry Judge and an eternal punisher of sin? History tells us that Bishop Latimer once preached a sermon before King Henry VIII, which greatly offended his royal auditor by its plainness. The king ordered him to preach again the next Sabbath, and to make public apology for his offense. The bishop ascended the pulpit and read his text, and thus began his sermon: "Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest; therefore, take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease. But then, consider well, Hugh! Dost thou not know from whom thou comest—upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and mighty God, who is all-present and beholdeth all thy ways, and who is able to cast thy soul into hell! Therefore take care that thou deliverest thy message faithfully." And so beginning, he preached over again, but with increased energy, the self-same sermon he had preached the week before. The fear of God delivered him from the fear of man. Thus when desire of this world's good or shrinking from this world's frown is in danger of taking away our power of sober reflection and turning right decisions into wrong, it is of infinite value to have hell yawn before us and to be compelled by its terrors to cry with David: "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments."

But fear leads us farther than to mere breaking from our sins. It opens the way for solid trust in God's mercy. Fear may exist, indeed, without actually bringing us to pardon and peace, and so may be only the "sorrow of the world that worketh death." But this is not the purpose and aim of it. It is meant to work that "repentance that needeth not to be repented of." Rightly used, fear brings us to the cross of Christ and to the acceptance of Christ as a Saviour. It brings us to the forgiveness of sins and to reconciliation with God. It brings us to faith and the cleansing of our souls in the blood of Jesus. Not that fear has in itself any power to save. "'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear." Fear is not like the rough cactus plant which contains in itself the beautiful and brilliant flower. Fear never brings forth love as its mere natural fruit and product. But fear opens the way for love, as the night opens the way for morning. Fear drives us to Christ, and he does for us what fear itself could never do. Noah, we are told, was "moved by fear" to prepare an ark, and in that ark both he and his family were saved. So the storm and flood of God's anger are foretold to us simply that we may find in Christ our ark of safety. With safety comes joy. The fear by which Noah had been moved was only the dark background against which the joy of deliverance shone all the brighter. And so the anguish of past fear gives a new intensity of joy to the redeemed soul as it stands on the firm unshaken rock of Christ and his promises of mercy. And then with safety comes love for Christ the deliverer. To use the comparison of an old writer, true fear draws after it true love, as the needle draws after it the thread. The needle pierces at first, but then that is not the permanent thing. It only makes way for the thread, and the thread remains after the needle is removed, to unite and bind, both safely and strongly. So for him who casts himself wholly into Jesus' arms, fear is utterly removed and love only remains, to bind God to him and him to God. Or to take still another illustration: Fear is only like the grimy tug which tows out the great vessel from the turbid water of the river until she reaches the clear sea and fresh breeze, and, spreading her sails and catching the wind, can leave the tug behind her. So the soul whose first thoughts of religion were induced by fear soon leaves all fear behind, because it is borne onward by the all-sufficient breeze of love, and sings with the poet:

Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ!
  Should I not love thee well?
Not for the hope of winning heaven,
  Nor of escaping hell.

Not with the hope of gaining aught;
  Not seeking a reward;
But as thyself hast loved me,
  O ever-loving Lord!

E'en so I love thee, and will love,
  And in thy praise will sing;
Solely because thou art my God,
  And my eternal King.

Such is the possible and proper and normal condition of the believer. Why, then, does the Christian ever fear? Simply because he leaves Christ and comes down to the low ground of unbelief and sin. Fear is the shadow of sin. As sin grows less, so will fear grow less; when sin comes to an end, fear will come to an end also. As Christ is the Saviour from sin then, so he is the Saviour from fear. Fear is meant all through our experience to show us our need of Christ and to drive us to Christ, the refuge of sinners. When we first come to Christ and renounce our sins the dominion of fear is broken. But it resumes its power whenever we go back to sin, and warns us, then, that we must return to Christ in new submission, or have our portion with the hypocrites. But, on the other hand, the nearer we are to Christ and the farther from sin, the farther we are from fear. As we merge our lives more and more by faith in the all-conquering life of the Redeemer, fear gradually dies away and love takes its place. And when at last we see Christ as he is and are prefectly like him, the last possibility of sin and the last possibility of fear will die together. May our gracious Lord lead you all along this happy path of a growing Christian experience! Be willing to let him draw you even by fear, if need be, for when fear has served its purpose, he will break its power, and delivering you from it more and more as he delivers you from sin, will lead you onward step by step to that blessed state where "perfect love casts out all fear."

Thirty-eight years ago a student of Yale College was roused to see the worthlessness and wickedness of his past life and to cherish poignant fears for the future. Fear led him to break away from his sins, to seek the counsel of religious friends, to announce his determination to live as a Christian. God blessed his decision, and made it the means of changing his own life and the lives of many others. That young man is older now, but he has never ceased to be thankful that God sent fear to arrest him in his course and to bring him to repentance and faith. And he urges upon all college men who have not yet begun to live for God a like fear, a like decision, a like faith. Would to God that I might induce some of you, my friends, this very day, to renounce all evil and to enter upon the service of Christ! If you will not be moved by love, be moved by fear, for the fear of the Lord, if it is not the end, is at least the beginning, of wisdom!

XXXII

PAUL'S THORN IN THE FLESH[1]

And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, wherefore, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Cor. 12:7-9.)

PAUL's life, like Christ's, was one of great contrasts—Jesus went up to the Mount of Transfiguration, but he also went down to the Garden of Gethsemane; Paul had visions and revelations of the Lord, but he also had a messenger of Satan to buffet him.

The vision of which the apostle here speaks is not recorded in the book of Acts. He himself tells us that it was more than fourteen years before the time when he wrote this epistle to the Corinthians. This would place it during his sojourn in Antioch, before his first missionary journey began. The vision indeed was a sort of divine preparation for his missionary activity, as the transfiguration of Christ was a preparation for his redemptive suffering upon the cross. For once Paul was caught up into the third heaven and heard unspeakable words, words that it would be wrong to speak on account of their sacredness. For once he who was to be a marvel of independent activity became the object of another's activity, was carried out of himself, was played upon as a passive instrument, was merged in the life and power of his Lord. Was it to show him that his seeming independence was after all only another manifestation of Christ, and that Christ was his only source of strength?

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[1] A sermon preached in the First Baptist Church, New Britain, Conn., June 27, 1897.

However this may be, the contrast quickly came. That the revelation might not unduly exalt him, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh. It is *Paul's Thorn in the Flesh* that I take for my theme. The first question that arises is with regard to the nature of this thorn. What was the thorn in the flesh of which Paul speaks? Interpreters have widely differed here. Some have believed that spiritual assaults must be meant, such as blasphemous thoughts or pangs of conscience on account of his past persecutions of the church. Others have referred it to the assaults of enemies who served Satan, or to the general afflictions and hardships of the apostolic office. Neither of these explanations seems satisfactory, because the thorn in the flesh was, on the one hand, *a thorn*—some definite trouble that could be compared only to the continual piercing of a thorn; and, on the other hand, a thorn *in the flesh*—some bodily trouble that greatly hindered the apostle's comfort and usefulness. But granting that it was a physical infirmity to which Paul alluded, there is still a great variety of opinions as to what that physical infirmity was. Was it melancholy arising from an imperfectly nourished brain, such as possibly caused the flight of Elijah from the threats of Jezebel? Was it headache, hemorrhage, fainting, epilepsy? Was it a constant tendency to malarial fever, as Professor Ramsay supposes? No one of these views finds corroboration in Paul's life or writings. The trial was something *local,*—it did not weaken his general system, since his labors continued in spite of it. It was something *continuous,* that was always threatening his usefulness; it was something *conspicuous,* so that all could see it; it was something *humiliating,* so that it was a source of constant suffering to the apostle. Let us see whether we cannot find some clue to the nature of the malady in what Paul says of himself, and in what others say of him.

His opponents at Corinth declared of him that his bodily presence was weak. There was something about his appearance which suggested weakness. He himself felt that this ill-looking peculiarity interfered with the success of his preaching. Not only did his Corinthian enemies say that his speech was of no account, but he told them that he was with them in weakness and fear and much trembling. In his letter to the Galatians he seems to intimate that this source of weakness in his public address was a disease of the eyes. He gratefully remembers that when he first preached to them, though this infirmity of his tempted them to despise and reject his gospel, they still received him as if he had been an angel of God, nay, as if he had been Jesus Christ himself. Instead of ridiculing him, they were moved to pity. "I bear you witness," he says, "that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me." It was apparently some sort of ophthalmia, accompanied by or resulting in an external inflammation, which not only disfigured him and made him seem contemptible to those who had not learned to know the man, but also prevented him from seeing clearly, and made concentration of vision painful to himself.

We have learned in our later days that trouble with the eyes may simulate many other diseases of stomach and brain. The effort required to accommodate the sight to various distances may produce nervous prostration. It is significant that Paul wrote none of his epistles with his own hand. He always dictated them to an amanuensis. This fact made it possible for his enemies to forge letters in his name, and there is some evidence that such forged letters were in existence. To make his readers sure that any given epistle was indeed written by him, he therefore added, to what the amanuensis had written, a few lines in his own hand. But this appears to have been an effort to him. The condition of his eyes made it difficult for him to write in small characters, or what we would call "a fine hand." At the close of the letter to the Galatians, then, he appends these words: "See with how large letters I write to you with my own hand." The large characters, so different from the small letters which the amanuensis had used, would be an affecting witness to the brethren of Galatia that it was indeed the half-blind Paul who had sent them the Epistle.

Can we trace back this malady to its beginning? It seems as if it were connected with Paul's conversion. On the way to Damascus there shone around him a light out of heaven, so bright that it took away his sight and smote him to the dust. He fell upon the earth, and when he arose he could no longer see. One glimpse of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ had stricken him blind. His companions "led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus, and he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink." As by miracle he lost his sight, so by miracle he recovered it. Ananias laid hands upon him, "and straightway there fell from his eyes, as it were, scales, and he received his sight." Those three days of blindness were a symbol to him of the blindness of his ignorance and unbelief, and the new light that streamed in upon him was a symbol of the knowledge and joy that proceeded from his crucified and risen Saviour. Is it too much to believe that some portion of that physical evil was permitted to remain, to remind him of his past sin and of his wonderful deliverance? Some think that Paul's inability to recognize the high priest, when he was summoned before the Sanhedrin, was due to defective vision. The high priest had commanded him to be smitten on the mouth, and Paul had said in his indignation: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall! and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" When those that stood by rebuked him: "Revilest thou God's high priest?" Paul replied: "I knew not, brethren, that he was the high priest." It was possibly his imperfect sight that prevented him from perceiving the peculiarities of dress which distinguished the high priest from the rest of his judges.

Thus it appears most probable that Paul's thorn in the flesh was a disease of the eyes, which constituted a humbling reminder of his unbelieving days, when he persecuted Christ in the persons of his disciples, and a perpetual hindrance to the successful accomplishment of his mission of preaching the gospel. I do not claim that the evidence of this is demonstrative, but only that it makes this conclusion more probable than any other. Fortunately it is not necessary for us to reach absolute certainty with regard to the nature of the thorn in the flesh. Other matters about which we may be certain are of greater practical importance. Let me call your attention then to a second question: In what sense was this thorn in the flesh a messenger of Satan to buffet Paul? We may put the question more generally: What relation has Satan to the physical evils with which the Christian is often afflicted?

There is a sense in which Satan may be regarded as the author of all evil. He was the first transgressor, and the first example of sin. It is he who led astray our first parents, according to Scripture. He is not only himself a liar, but he is the father of lies, because he has led multitudes of other beings into self-deception, and deception of their fellows. He is called a murderer, and is said to have the power of death, because he has persuaded the whole race of man, with the single exception of Christ, to commit spiritual suicide, to cut itself off from the life and love of God, and to expose itself to physical and eternal death. He is the prince of the power of the air, and he is said to work even now in the children of disobedience. The torments of conscience can be indirectly attributed to him, for it is he who by temptation brings men under the reproaches of their moral nature. And since all physical evil is mediately or immediately the result of sin, all physical evil may be referred to Satan as its author.

Certain passages of Scripture seem to go farther than this, and to imply that external nature and the human body are to some extent given over to Satan's control. In the book of Job, Satan is permitted to afflict the just man, in order to prove and to perfect his virtue. Winds and lightnings and disease are all made for a time his servants. When Jesus walks upon the sea, he rebukes the winds and the waves, as if their commotion had been due to a supernatural and malignant intelligence. Jesus speaks of a poor, decrepit woman, bowed together and unable to lift herself up, as "one whom Satan hath bound these eighteen years." And, in the Acts, Peter speaks of this same Jesus as going about "doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil." Upon the ground of such passages the mediæval Roman Church built up an enormous fabric of superstition, and attributed to Satan an almost complete control over nature and over the physical system of man. He could be exorcised only by holy water and by priestly conjurations. The Reformers inherited more or less of this superstitious exaggeration of Satan's power. Luther saw Satan nearer to man than his coat, or his shirt, or even his skin. In all misfortune he saw the devil's work. Was there a conflagration in the town? By looking closely you might see a demon blowing upon the flame. Pestilence and storm he attributed to

Satan. Men might even make covenants with the Evil One, like that of Faust, who purchased supernatural power at the price of final perdition.

All this is a wholly unwarrantable extreme. There is an opposite extreme which denies the existence of a personal adversary or his influence in nature. Scripture doctrine is midway between these two opposite exaggerations. The truth seems to be that Satan is permitted, for special reasons of God's providence, to exert occasional influence upon nature and to use its laws and agencies with a higher intelligence than man's. There seems to have been permitted a special activity of Satan in temptation and possession during our Saviour's ministry, in order that Christ's power might be demonstrated. But Satan's power is limited, both in time and in extent, by the permissive will of God. Satan is neither omnipotent, omniscient, nor omnipresent. We are to attribute disease and natural calamity to his agency, only when this is matter of special revelation. Opposed to God as Satan is, God compels him to serve his purposes. His power for harm lasts but for a season, and ultimate judgment and punishment will vindicate God's permission of his evil agency.

So we grant that Paul's thorn in the flesh was, just as he describes it, "a messenger of Satan, sent to buffet me." Yet all this was permitted by God. A third question now suggests itself: How are we to understand God's permission of this thorn in the flesh which Satan makes the means of so much evil? We can only answer that the permission of satanic temptation is a striking instance of the permission of moral evil in general, and is to be explained, if we can explain it at all, upon the same principle. This is a moral universe, a universe for the development of virtue. And virtue is impossible without freedom, probation, and the possibility of falling into sin. Another sort of universe can be conceived of, but it would not be a universe worth the having,—it would be a universe where good would be rendered certain by constraint upon the individual will. But such good would be no good, for it would be compulsion and necessity. A father may possibly keep his little son from transgression by following him constantly with a whip, or by watching him continually through keyholes. But such obedience will be exchanged for lawlessness and riot so soon as the boy escapes from his father's eye and control. No true virtue can be developed in that way. Goodness can be attained only when there is freedom to disobey. The law must be proclaimed, motives to obedience must be presented; but then the will must be left to do the right, or, if it please, to do the wrong. A universe of puppets, made to go only as they were pulled by strings, would not be a universe worthy of God, nor of any moral value. God wants only free obedience. He wants love, but love that is freely given. He wants creatures like himself in moral character, as they can only be by choosing, of their own free will, to be like him.

Now such a universe as this involves the possibility of moral evil, of self-perversion, of sin and misery and death. But the system in which sin is a possible incident, or even a certain incident, may be preferable to a system in which there is no freedom, or to no system at all. Shall we shut God out from the possibility of creating, simply because creation may involve sin? Not so. And especially not so, since at the same time that God permits moral evil, he provides a remedy for it—the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. Let us remember that God never is himself the author of sin—it is the greatest of blasphemies to attribute evil to the Holy One—he cannot himself be tempted by evil, neither tempteth he any man. He is simply the author of free beings who, in their own perversity and rebellion, are themselves the authors of sin.

That Satan is permitted to tempt is no more inconsistent with God's goodness than that men are permitted to tempt. It is no more wonderful that Satan should have been permitted to test the faith of the apostle by inflicting his thorn in the flesh, than it is that wicked men should have been permitted to test his faith by their opposition to his preaching. No argument against God's permission of satanic temptation can be urged which would not equally apply to God's permission of human temptation. This is a vast universe, and our moral life is conducted amid a network of influences from both the natural and the supernatural worlds. Our warfare is not simply with flesh and blood. The principalities and powers of darkness are contending for our souls with the principalities and powers of light. It is a great struggle, but it only illustrates the value of the soul and the solemnity of our probation. Even Paul the apostle has to fight the good fight before he can finish his course and receive his crown. Even he, like Bunyan's Pilgrim in the Dark Valley, must have his hand-to-hand conflict with Apollyon.

Satan's temptations do not mean defeat, but conquest and uplifting, to him who summons his will to resist. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Temptation has in itself no tendency to lead the soul astray. If the soul is holy, temptation may only confirm it in virtue. Only the evil will, self-determined against God, can turn temptation into an occasion of ruin. As the sun's heat has no tendency to wither the plant rooted in deep and moist soil, but only causes the plant to send down its roots the deeper and to fasten itself the more strongly, so temptation has in itself no tendency to pervert the soul. It was only the seeds that "fell upon the rocky places where they had not much earth" that "were scorched" when "the sun was risen"; and our Lord attributes their failure, not to the sun, but to their lack of root and of soil. The same temptation that occasions the ruin of the false disciple stimulates to sturdy growth the virtue of the true Christian. And so the same temptation which Satan means for evil, God means for good; the same thorn in the flesh which from one point of view is Satan's work is from the higher point of view God's appointment. So Robert Browning can say:

> Temptation sharp? Thank God a second time!
> Why comes temptation but for man to meet
> And master, and make crouch beneath his foot,
> And so be pedestaled in triumph! Pray
> "Lead us into no such temptations, Lord"?
> Yea, but, "O thou whose servants are the bold,
> Lead such temptations by the head and hair,
> Reluctant dragons, up to who dares fight,
> That so he may do battle and have praise."

But now a fourth and last question must be answered. It is this: Does God look on unmoved and uninterested while Satan uses the thorn in the flesh to harass and afflict Paul? If it were so, then the struggle would be not only momentous, but also appalling. I have already suggested that God permitted the struggle only in view of the Cross, and that the very corner-stone of the system of things was Christ. That same Saviour whose life has entered into nature and humanity has been himself afflicted in all the afflictions of the race. The decree of redemption is as old as the permission of apostasy, and no sacrifice and suffering on account of sin has been undergone by any man equal to that which has been endured by our incarnate God. God has permitted the thorn in the flesh only because he has seen it to be a necessary means for the perfecting of Christian character and for drawing the Christian nearer to himself. See how the discipline works in the case of Paul. He beseeches the Lord thrice that the thorn may depart from him, and that he may be depressed and humiliated no longer. But the thorn is not taken away; Paul only receives grace to bear it. Ah, my friends, there is the solution of the mystery: God's grace brings victory over Satan, and the assaults of the adversary are made the means of glorifying the Saviour. How often we have seen the face lit up with resignation and hope, even while the thorn was piercing the side! Even as Jesus himself stripped off the thronging hosts of evil spirits that wrapped him like a garment upon the cross and triumphed over them in the very cross which they had brought him, so he enabled his apostle to make the very thorn in the flesh the means of loftier spiritual attainment and of more perfect union with his Lord.

John Milton spoke of "the unresistible might of weakness." It was a reminiscence of Paul's experience. He does not mean that weakness itself is strength. He only means that our weakness is the occasion for the exercise of divine power. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. When we feel our weakness most, then we are most ready to receive help from God; then God can most completely take possession of us. "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses," says the apostle, "that the power of Christ may rest upon me (or spread a tabernacle over me). Wherefore, I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." And so spiritual strength is fostered by bodily weakness, and with the thorn in the flesh Christ gives the greatest joys of the spirit.

Have you a thorn in the flesh? Some secret infirmity of body or trouble of mind, which seems at times the very minister of Satan to destroy your usefulness and block your way to heaven? Is there some appetite that clamors for indulgence, some affection that longs for satisfaction, till at times you think the conflict insupportable? Have others injured you or slandered you? Are outward circumstances untoward? Is ridicule your portion when you try to do good? And is this thorn in the flesh something so sharp that you cannot forget it, yet so fixed that you cannot remove it? Perhaps you have concluded that because Satan has something to do with it your only course is to hate it and despair. Dear friend, you mistake. Satan's agency does not exclude God's. Satan means it for evil, but God permits it for good. Satan would make it the means of your undoing. God intends it to test you, to stimulate you, to show you your own weakness, but to show you also his power to save. Do not let Satan have his way! Cry mightily to God! He will enable you to overcome, and to tread down Satan under your feet. He may not take away the thorn, but he will surely say to every one who trusts him: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my power is made perfect in weakness."

King Henry the Seventh had as his emblem, in all the windows of his palaces and churches, a carven crown in a bush of thorns. It had a double significance. On the one hand, in this life there are thorns for every crown of pleasure or riches or power or honor; and, on the other hand, for all the thorns that pierce the flesh during the Christian's earthly pilgrimage there is a crown of glory in God's future kingdom. Let me add to Henry the Seventh's emblem this meaning also: We do not have to wait for the kingdom, but we have it even here. John speaks of the kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ. Bearing the thorn in the flesh, in the strength of Christ, we have already victory achieved and heaven begun. We are more than conquerors through him that loved us; our very pains are turned to pleasures; and, whether we see it or not, the angels see, and God our Father sees, the amaranthine crown upon our brows.

XXXIII

CHRIST'S MORAL SYSTEM [1]

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. (Phil. 4:8.)

It has sometimes been urged as an objection to Christianity that, if it does not cultivate really ignoble qualities of character, it certainly leaves out of its plan of human development some of the elements of true manhood, and so is false by defect. It has seemed to me that a sermon upon Christian morality, its essential characteristics and aims, might remove any such unjust impressions and convince us of its supreme claims upon us. I shall best accomplish my purpose by arranging my thoughts in a series of answers to the question: In what respects is the moral teaching of the Christian system superior to the moral teachings of other systems of religion? Of course I mean by the Christian system, not the practices or prejudices of any given body of men who call themselves Christians, but the teachings of Christ and his apostles, as we find them in the New Testament. Let us go to the fountain-heads and judge each system by the words of its founders. If possible let us look at Christian morality and other systems of morality in their essential principles, and determine which is most worthy of our study and adoption.

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[1] A sermon preached in the Emmanuel Baptist Church, Albany, N. Y., July 29, 1883.

The words of the apostle which I have taken for my text intimate, first of all, that the moral precepts of Christianity are not necessarily new or undiscoverable by human reason, but that their superiority lies rather in their combination and complete freedom from error. It cannot be denied, nor should we wish to deny, that more or less clear adumbrations of Christ's noblest precepts occasionally appear in the writings of heathen who lived before his advent, or who knew nothing of his teachings. Confucius published the Golden Rule when he said: "What you wish done to yourself, do to others," and declared that his doctrine consisted in "having the heart, and in loving one's neighbor as one's self." "Hatred," says a Buddhist sacred book, "does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love—this is the eternal rule." "It is never right to return an injury," says Plato. "A philosopher, when smitten, must love those that smite him, as if he were the father, the brother of all men," said Epictetus. "It is peculiar to man," said Marcus Antoninus, "to love even those who do wrong. Ask thyself daily to how many ill-minded persons thou hast shown a kind disposition." "He compares the wise and humane soul," says a recent writer, "to a spring of pure water which blesses even him who curses it; and the Oriental story likens such a soul to the sandalwood tree, which imparts its fragrance even to the axe which cuts it down."

There are such precepts as these in the writings of heathen moralists. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that on this account the moral systems of the heathen could bear comparison with that of Christ. For such precepts as these are rare indeed before Christ came; rather the venturous guesses of a noble mood than the fundamental principles upon which a whole body of doctrine was built; single rays of the true light flashing out amid great darkness, rather than indications that universal benevolence was recognized, even in philosophy, as the soul of morals. Side by side with these fragmentary glimpses of truth are multitudinous and fatal errors. Confucius, for example, recognized no personal God as the author of law and the model of love; the worship of an abstract heaven and an abstract earth which he established was united with a worship of departed spirits and a worship of himself. Buddhism likewise was a moral system devoid of all authority, because it confessed no supreme God, who was at once Legislator and Judge; while by substituting for God's approbation the selfish motive of accumulating a stock of merits, it made virtue to be a mere calculating prudence. Plato held that men needed no motive but the right itself—if you taught them right they would be sure to do it—and then in his ideal Republic he abolished marriage and the family, encouraged some most shameless vices, and provided for the putting to death of young children that were diseased or deformed. Epictetus had for his ultimate virtue a philosophic insensibility; we should not suffer ourselves to be troubled by anything external, nor be moved in the least by the sufferings or the wickedness of our neighbors; even the wife and children of the philosopher should be reckoned as things external to him. And Marcus Aurelius, Stoic as he was, was a prey to superstition, and persecuted Christianity. "The uncertainty and nothingness of all human things," says another, "the resistless stream of life in whose vortex all being is swallowed up and disappears, was the ever-recurring burden of his thoughts. Sorrow and disappointment cast a black veil of mourning over his whole system of contemplation and over almost every one of his reflections. 'Farewell to hope! all ye who enter here,' was the inscription over the gate leading to the Sanctuary of the Stoa."

I have thus set the errors and defects of these heathen writers over against their occasional utterances of moral truth, not to disparage them, but simply to show the relation they sustain to Christ. They give us faint rays of light, like the first glimmerings of the dawn, but Christ is the Sun, from whose unseen disk all their light proceeded, and who gathers up all into himself when once he has risen upon the world. It is no objection to Christianity that some of its truths were dimly perceived before Jesus came. This only shows that Christianity is founded on the needs and constitution of human nature, and therefore is eternal truth, just as the great doctrines of our religion, Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, Judgment were faintly foreshadowed by the wild mythologies and rites of paganism; and this only proves that human nature craves such doctrines to satisfy its wants, but finds its satisfaction only in the clear revelations of the Scriptures. So the broken lights of morality among the heathen point in like manner to Christ, the great Light of the World. See how Jesus teaches not simply the truth that Confucius taught, or that Plato taught, or that Epictetus taught, but all the truth that all these masters taught and ten thousand times as much besides—and that without a single one of the mistakes and falsities that mingled with the teaching of every one of these. It is the combination of all these separate glories in the teachings of Christ, and the unbroken majesty and purity and beauty of them that justifies *us* in saying: " Never man spake like this man." And this characteristic of the Christian morality is intimated in the text. Christianity is not anxious to assert the absolute originality of all the words of Christ. It takes up and appropriates and combines within itself " whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report."

But allowing that there is a *combination* of excellencies in the teachings of Christ, such as surpasses the moral precepts of all other masters, is it true that this combination includes everything? Are the morals of Christianity perfect in their fulness—do they embrace every virtue; do they condemn every vice? Some say no. John Stuart Mill, for example, wonders that any one who derives his knowledge of Christian morality from the Bible itself can suppose that it was announced or intended as a complete doctrine of morals. Now, in one sense Mr. Mill's statement is true, while in another it is very untrue. Christian morality is certainly not all-comprehensive, in the sense of affording definite rules for all the possible emergencies and contingencies of human life. It is impossible in the very nature of things that the Scriptures should contain such a code. Take an illustration from civil law. When I lived in Ohio I found that, though the State government there had been in existence only about seventy-five years, the statutes enacted by its legislatures in that brief period already formed a library of themselves, the mazes of which only a lawyer could thread. It took the two houses at Columbus months every year to keep the laws of the Commonwealth anywhere nearly abreast with the progress and wants of the people. Now, suppose Jesus had attempted, and God had permitted, the enunciation of minute rules for every congeries of circumstances that might arise in the course of ages, in the moral life of individuals and of society and of the church, why, the world itself, to use John's hyperbole, could not contain the books that would have been written. The whole system of moral teaching would have broken down by its own weight. And even this would not have been the worst feature of the case. Allowing that such a system of directions could ever have been put to use by the mass of men, a thing in itself manifestly impossible, would the effect of such marking out of every human duty be salutary upon human mind and conscience? Who does not know that one of the grandest parts of our moral discipline and education is the weighing of questions of duty, the exercise of our intellects upon them, and the testing of our candor and justice involved therein? To have before us from moment to moment fixed orders for each act of life and to determine duty mechanically by the use of some sort of "ready reckoner"—this would be to take away one of the noblest instruments of our moral development, and to reduce us permanently to the condition of moral childhood.

There must be then some limitation in the moral precepts of Christianity, as regards their scope. Some things must be omitted if anything is to be really accomplished, and this limitation is not a mark of imperfection, but of wisdom. The first limit that is assigned is this: The Scriptures do not profess to give specific directions as to conduct in the varying circumstances of life, so much as to indicate the internal affections and virtues that are to be cultivated, and to insist upon them. There is great foresight here; for, once let the inward virtues establish themselves, whatever the circumstances may be, the virtues will turn these circumstances into occasions for manifesting themselves. You have all been struck at times by noting how Christ's Beatitudes are all conferred upon characteristics of mind and heart. You all remember how Paul's catalogue of the fruits of the Spirit is a catalogue of inward graces of character—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." And then the exercise of these virtues is enjoined toward all men, and in all the relations of life. So the Scripture morality is an exhibition of principles rather than rules, of principles which we are ourselves to apply, and to use our judgment and conscience in applying. Whatever practical conjunctures of circumstances are referred to in the Scripture precepts are referred to in the way of illustration of these principles, not as an attempt to exhaust all possible cases and furnish us with an application of each principle to all the circumstances that might arise. Now I ask whether this plan of publishing a moral system is not infinitely more wise than that of those Middle Age doctors who wrote their endless works upon casuistry or cases of conscience, making them so cumbrous that no human being could ever apply them to practical life or ever even read them through; or that of the Mohammedan Koran, which makes the essentials of religion to consist in just so many prayers, so much fasting, so much almsgiving, so much journeying to Mecca, and presents all manner of external duties in private and political life, like another Jewish collection of outward commandments and ordinances. No one indeed can compare the teaching of the New Testament with any other system the world has produced without being struck with the vast superiority of it as laying its chief stress upon the inward and spiritual. And within this sphere, which it has wisely taken as its proper province, we maintain that it is complete.

The main attacks upon the Christian morality have been characterized by real ignorance of the system assailed. It has been declared, for example, that Christianity says little or nothing of man's duty to the State, rather merging his social and political in his individual and personal relations. Nothing could be more untrue. " Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God." " Render therefore unto all their dues—tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." These precepts recognize most solemnly man's duties to civil government, and we all know how upon the strength of these very precepts unlimited sacrifices for the maintenance of our national unity were urged and secured during our last great war.

It has been said that "whatever exists of magnanimity, high-mindedness, personal dignity, even the sense of honor, is derived from the purely human, not from the religious, part of our education and never could have grown out of a standard of ethics in which the only worth professedly recognized is that of obedience." To such a charge as this we only need oppose the words of our text. They show that every one of these virtues is recognized and enforced by Christianity. Paul enjoins upon us "whatsoever things are true"; all truth, whether with regard to so-called secular or sacred things; all truth, intellectual or moral, the wisdom of the schools, or the teachings of nature, or the results of these in a symmetrical and well-ordered character—all this is to be the aim and gradual achievement of the Christian. "Whatsoever things are honest," or honorable: here that fine sense of honor, the possession of which has sometimes been deemed foreign to Christianity, is directly enjoined upon us. The very word brings before us the image of an honor sensitive and stainless, scorning the wrong and the mean, and rejoicing in all that is truly high-toned and noble. "Whatsoever things are just": justice or righteousness, devoid of all considerations of personal prejudice or interest, that swears to one's own heart and changes not, that looks beyond men's circumstances and surroundings to their characters and to their souls, that does justice though the heavens fall, and not only does righteousness, but loves righteousness with an inward attachment and ardor. "Whatsoever things are pure": the freedom from all sensual and base desires, the clear eye fixed on the unsullied glories of holiness, the motives of the heart devoid of all that is degrading and selfish. "Whatsoever things are lovely," or amiable: all the graces that make up the true gentleman or gentlewoman. "Whatsoever things are of good report," or winning and attractive, rather: no asceticism nor sternness here, but the "pleasing of others for their good to edification," and for that end the cultivation of all beautiful traits and accomplishments, not only in character, but in outward dress and manner. "If there be any virtue": here that grand martial word of the old Greeks is brought in to describe the Christian's spirit; the valorous courage, the manly independence, the persistent energy which had given the soldiers of Alexander their victories on so many well-fought fields are to be reproduced in our spiritual warfare as soldiers of Christ. "If there be any praise": the Christian is not to hold himself impassive and thoughtless of the opinions of those around him. A certain consideration may justly be given to the praise of men. Even the love of human approbation, which constitutes among worldly men so strong an incentive to excellence, is not to be despised among the helps and graces of the Christian. Of all these things the apostle bids us "think." Can any description of beautiful character penned by heathen philosopher vie with this ideal for comprehensiveness?

I think the most careful examination will only lead us to adopt more and more unhesitatingly the conclusion of a late writer that "the man who should embody in perfection the precepts and spirit of Christianity would be found the most harmonious and complete development of which humanity is capable. He could not be dishonest who 'provides things honest in the sight of all men'; nor selfish who 'looks not only on his own things but also on the things of others'; nor unjust who 'gives to every one the things that are equal'; nor rebellious who is 'subject to the powers that be and are ordained of God'; nor meanly submissive who listening to the voice of conscience can say: 'I must obey God rather than man'; nor rude who obeys the injunction 'Be courteous'; nor immoral who abstains 'from every kind of evil'; nor inhospitable who is 'not forgetful to entertain strangers'; nor quarrelsome who, as much as in him lies, 'lives peaceably with all men'; nor prejudiced who 'proves all things, and holds fast that which is good'; nor slothful who 'works with his own hands the thing that is good'; nor relentless or revengeful who 'forgives as God in Christ has forgiven him'; nor deceitful who has 'the wisdom without hypocrisy'; nor morose who is 'gentle to all men'; nor a wilful perpetrator of evil whose life is inspired by that gospel which teaches that 'denying ungodliness and every worldly lust, we must live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.'"

I have spoken of the freedom of Christian morality from all error, and at the same time its exceeding comprehensiveness. I should like to speak of two other elements of its power. On the one hand, the organic unity of its precepts, the organizing of them all around the great central thought of love to God and man, so that instead of a scheme of philosophical ethics, abstruse and complicated, there is a simplicity about them which renders them intelligible to a child. It is an infinite gain in our effort to learn our duties, when the many become one, and we grasp a single principle which once carried out will carry all subordinate duties with it. And no other system of morals can compare with that of Christianity in this reducing of all duties to one by declaring " love is the fulfilling of the law." On the other hand, Christian morality is lifted far up above other systems by its proper conception of the relation between itself and religion.

There have been systems of morality that made nothing of religion, duty to man was everything, duty to God was utterly unrecognized. There have been systems of religion that made nothing of morality —certain rights or forms have been supposed to secure God's favor, whatever vice or crime might stain the heart and life. But Christian morality makes our duties to God and our duties to man to be parts of one great system. We cannot truly love God without loving our brother also, and we cannot love our brother without having in us the love of God. In other words religion and morality are inseparable, two hemispheres, both of which are necessary to form a completed whole. But these characteristics of Christian morals which present so many marked contrasts to the morals of human systems we must pass by with this simple glance, in order to look last of all at a final excellence of the morality of the Scriptures, namely, that it does not leave us with the bare *publication* of law, but points us to the means provided for the *fulfilment* of the law it has itself laid down. It is comparatively easy to tell men their duties; how to secure the performance of those duties is quite another matter. Now here the Scripture morality shows what no other system of morals ever did: an actual human life in which its precepts have been realized, the law drawn out in living characters, in the character and example of Jesus. Confucius and Plato and Epictetus could preach ethics; but, alas, how far short of Jesus did they come in following their own precepts! And what men need more than law is the evidence that law can be obeyed. Example speaks louder than precept, and the example of Him who, though he was rich, yet became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich, has done more for the moral progress of the race than all the maxims of all the sages.

Then too, Christian morality furnishes *motives* to right living. Christ's precepts are accompanied with revelations of the presence and care and love of God, which impel us to obedience. The philosophers with their distant and unloving God, if they had any God at all, could never make men virtuous, because they had no motive to set against the tremendous force of man's wayward passions. But Christ, revealing the infinite compassion and forgiving grace of the Godhead, interpreting God to us in the Cross, uttering to us God's own words of cheer and promise, brings the most powerful of all motives in the universe to bear upon us. We feel that we *must* love God, because he has first loved us. Or, if even this example and this motive are not enough, Christ's plan goes further still—it contemplates such an inworking of his own Spirit into our souls that we shall be made to love, and the performance of duty shall be a delight.

The personal union and communion of our souls with the living Jesus; this can transform us and make us new creatures, so that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Here is the glory of Christ's moral system, that it is not simply a blank enunciation of duty, with the threat "do or die" attached to it, but that it connects itself with a glorious plan for the renovation of humanity and the creation within us of the true spirit of obedience. And without securing this last, what can you accomplish by mere law? Make your child obey you from mere fear and what have you done for him? He will disgrace your name so soon as he is out of your control. You have done nothing for him until the principle of obedience has taken root in him, and the doing of right has become a rational and voluntary matter with him. You have seen a clock that had run down. Set the pendulum vibrating and the clock will tick for a little while and seem to run. But how quickly it stops! What is the matter? Why, it needs something more radical done with it, something that will reach its internal mechanism and set the springs of action to work. Wind it up, and it will go hour after hour. So mere law can set men acting in a moral fashion a little while, like the pendulum, and it may seem to be real moral life; but how quickly all this action ceases if the affections, the springs of life, are not changed by divine grace, if Christ does not wind up the clock by bringing his own life and spirit inwardly to bear upon it. And this no other system ever did but the gospel of Christ. This, and this only, is able to make us wise unto salvation. For " what the law could not do," whether uttered by heathen or Jewish teachers, that " God did," by " sending his own Son " to redeem our nature, and his own Spirit to unite us to this redeemed human nature in him.

See then, my friends, the glorious ideal of character set before us—whatsoever things are true, honorable, righteous, pure, amiable, winning, manly, worthy of praise—to be like Christ, to be like God. A Christian man, whom I know, once started up from contemplation and said solemnly, and with intense feeling, " Oh, that I might be like God! " A sublime aim! But not too sublime; it is the very end proposed to us by God himself. Are you yet unreconciled to God? Well, sinners as you are, God has made it possible for you to be restored from your alienation and transgression and to be like him: " Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children." Are you children of God? Then show, in your moral character, a family resemblance to him who gave you life. If we come short of this, it surely is not because the model has not been set before us, nor because there is no help accessible to make us what we ought to be. Let this be a time of new consecration to this high end of our existence. Nothing else is enduring but a character formed after the divine plans and fitted for dwelling and communing with the great God who made us.

XXXIV

PRESENT VALUES[1]

This is the day which Jehovah hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. (Ps. 118:24.)

DID Jesus ever sing? Yes, and here we have the hymn. This One Hundred and Eighteenth Psalm is a part of the great Hallel, or song of triumph and thanksgiving, which the later Jews sang at their annual festivals, especially at the Passover. This custom is thought to have existed even in the time of Christ. If so, the words of the text were uttered by our Lord and by his disciples in the upper chamber just before his suffering. "When they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." Jesus fortified himself by the voice and the melody and the companionship of sacred song, just before the prince of this world came with his sorest temptation. It is said by some that the singing of the Passover hymn was not confined to the houses where the sacrificial lamb was eaten, but that, after the family groups had broken up, detached parties still kept up the song as they walked through the darkness of the streets, and so the whole night was made vocal with the words of praise: "Oh, give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good; for his loving-kindness endureth forever."

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[1] A sermon preached at the ordination of C. A. McAlpine, in the Bronson Avenue Church, Rochester, N. Y., June 10, 1904.

For the joy that was set before him Jesus endured the cross. It is interesting to read this One Hundred and Eighteenth Psalm, and to think how its several utterances must have encouraged and comforted his soul at the time when the darkness of the skies was but a faint symbol of the approaching darkness of God's forsaking. "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar," the die is cast and there is no retreat; it must needs be that Christ should suffer. "All nations compassed me about,"—the Greek and Latin and Hebrew inscription over the cross was the sign that the whole earth had conspired to reject and murder its Lord. "Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall, but Jehovah helped me. Jehovah is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation." "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of Jehovah." "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. This is Jehovah's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which Jehovah hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

I suppose that the day originally alluded to in the psalm was the day when Israel passed through the waters of the Red Sea and came out an emancipated nation. But many successive generations of Israelites made the psalm their own and counted *their* day also the day which Jehovah had made. And if Jesus himself could regard the day of his crucifixion as the day of his lifting up and exaltation, and so as the day which the Lord had made, we too have a right to call our day the day which Jehovah has made, and can rejoice and be glad in it. I take this text therefore as the foundation of a sermon on PRESENT VALUES, or THE VALUE OF THE PRESENT DAY. We are so apt to relegate our good things to the future, that it will be well to think of the things that are ours here and now. I invite you to consider the subject as related, first, to the attributes of God; secondly, to God's methods of evolution; thirdly, to the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, fourthly, to the nature of Christian faith. All these throw light upon our theme.

First, then, consider what the attributes of God imply with regard to the value of the present day. We believe that God is omnipresent. But omnipresence is not the presence of a part of God in every place. God is not a material atmosphere, a part of which may be here and another part there. God is spirit, and spirit transcends all such limitations. Spirit is not confined to space. To arrive here, God does not need to depart there. To manifest himself in Christ he does not need to leave his throne in heaven. If only a part of God were here, it would not be the perfect God with whom we communed in prayer. Difficult as it seems at first, we must maintain that God's omnipresence is the presence of the whole of God in every place. God in all his attributes and powers is with me here and now. In like manner, omniscience is not a dividing up of God's attention, so that each particular thing has a share in his knowledge. Omniscience is rather the concentration of the whole mind of God upon each particular thing. He does not need to withdraw his attention from others in order to perceive me. I am at this very moment the object of a scrutiny which nothing escapes. "Thou, God, seest me," and seest me as perfectly as if there were no other in the universe to be the object of thine attention. Omnipotence too is nothing but infinite power ready to act in our time of need—power unexhausted by previous executions or by manifestations elsewhere, and able here and now to do exceeding abundantly, above all we can ask or think.

Our undervaluing of the present day is the result of our unbelief in God. We disbelieve in God's omnipresence, and so we postpone to the future our communion with him. We disbelieve in his omniscience, and so we postpone to the future our repentance of sin and our surrender to his service. We disbelieve in his omnipotence, and so we postpone to the future the reception of his gifts and the answer to our prayers. Alas, we are too often practical atheists! While we profess to believe in the living God, it is rather in a dead God, or a God far away, that we believe. We limit the Holy One of Israel, as that servant of Elisha did. Would that our eyes might be opened as were the eyes of that young man, so that we might see the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire, the symbols of God's perpetual presence and power with his people! If God be with us, who can be against us? Our God is the God of holiness, whose one aim is to set up the kingdom of truth and righteousness in the earth. And he is the God of love, who makes the humblest his instruments, and takes penitent sinners to be his witnesses. He can use you and me, unfaithful as we have been, even as he used the denying Peter to be his mouthpiece at Pentecost.

and used the persecuting Saul to be the apostle to the Gentiles. How quickly Peter's winning of the three thousand followed his blasphemous denial on the night of Christ's betrayal, and how quickly Paul's witnessing at Damascus that Jesus was the Christ followed his holding the clothes of those who stoned Stephen, and his haling of men and women before the Jewish tribunals that they might be put to death! God requires no long time to execute his purposes and to answer his people's prayers. One day is as good with him as a thousand years, and he can cut short his work in righteousness. Therefore we say: "This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

But, secondly, the value of the present day can be understood by considering God's method of evolution. By evolution we mean simply God's way of gradual unfolding, his processes of growth, his building upon the past, his making that which now is the seed and type of that which is to come. We have lost all our fear of evolution, since we discovered that it is simply the method of God, only the glove which can do nothing apart from the hand within the glove, only the sword which can do nothing apart from the hand that wields the sword. We are willing to recognize evolution in Hebrew history from Abraham to Christ, and evolution in the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, since evolution is nothing but the progressive leading of God's providence and the progressive teaching of God's Spirit. We see that there have been no real setbacks in God's working. His plan has never been frustrated. Even the wrath of man has been made to praise him, and with the remainder of wrath he has girded himself, as with a sword, for future conquest. Satan doubtless imagined that he had outwitted God when he nailed the Saviour to the cross; but that very cross was made the means of victory, when Jesus by faith and sacrifice stripped off from himself the principalities and powers of evil that swarmed around him in their last desperate onset, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them on that very cross which they had hoped would be the means of his overthrow.

If Christ could sing: "This is the day which Jehovah hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it," then no day of darkness should lead us to despond. Each new day marks an advance in the fulfilment of the divine plans. I am bound to believe that the present day is the most important that has ever yet dawned in the history of the world. The forces of good are stronger than they ever were before; and, if the forces of evil are also stronger, this is only a testimony to the strength of good which calls out a continually increasing opposition. So, in John's Gospel, evil and good grow side by side, like the tares and the wheat, but only that the good may show its ultimate power to hold its own and win the day. We can be genuine optimists in spite of the existence and growth of evil, when we remember that in God's plan of evolution there is a survival of the fittest. That which is morally best shall crowd out or convert all that is morally inferior to itself. God has his purpose in permitting the evil to survive, and a part of his purpose doubtless is to stimulate sympathy and effort in those who are good. In spite of vices and heresies and hatreds and wars, " God's in his heaven; all's right with the world." We are nearer the consummation, both in the church and in the world, than ever before, and so we can sing: " This is the day which Jehovah hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

In the third place, the promises of our Lord Jesus Christ should make us value the present day. Let us remember that he has promised to be with us all the days, even to the end of the present system of things. The omnipresence of God might seem an abstract and colorless thing, but it is not so with the omnipresence of our Lord Jesus. He told his disciples that his presence should assure to them an understanding of circumstances such as, apart from him, would have been impossible. " I have not called you servants, but friends; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth." The implication is that the friend of Christ will be able to enter into his plans, and to deal intelligently with each situation, as it arises. " Greater things than these shall ye do because I go to the Father." Not only shall a certain measure of Christ's omniscience be imparted to us, but also a certain measure of his omnipotence. He had done many miracles, but greater things should his disciples work. I do not think he refers to the removing of physical mountains or of physical diseases. I do believe that he means the cure of sin-sick souls and the removing of the mountainous spiritual obstacles that rise between the Christian and the accomplishment of his particular work for Christ. He himself is with us to fulfil his promises and to show himself mighty to save.

The words of Paul may be regarded as the posthumous words of Christ, even as his labors were Christ's posthumous works. And there is nothing that so possessed Paul's mind as the idea of the infinite fulness of Christ. " In him," he says, " dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." This means that the complete aggregate of the divine attributes, virtues, and energies has its permanent abode and residence in Jesus Christ. He is the synthesis of all the powers in and by which God manifests himself, whether in nature or in grace. The laws of nature are the habits of Christ. " The voice that rolls the stars along speaks all the promises." Paul goes on to say: "And in him ye are made full"—which means that our emptiness ceases when Christ enters into our souls. As the Apostle John expresses it: " We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," and " of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace"—ever-renewed and ever-increasing measures of grace to-day, to replace yesterday's supply. So, to use again Paul's language, we " attain unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," are " filled with all the fulness of God," and the church becomes the body of Christ, " the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Dear friends, in the light of these exceeding great and precious promises, does it not appear that we are all prodigals, perishing with hunger and trying in vain to satisfy ourselves with husks, while in our Father's house there is bread enough and to spare? Since all this fulness of God is offered us in our Lord Jesus Christ, and we may find him here and now, should we not sing: "This is the day which Jehovah hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it"?

Last of all, consider what light is thrown upon the value of the present day by the nature of Christian faith. For faith is nothing but our voluntary giving of ourselves to Christ and our voluntary taking of Christ and his fulness to be ours. "Abide in me, and I in you," says our Saviour. We abide in Christ by an entire consecration; we have him abiding in us, by an appropriating faith. The action of the will is requisite both in giving and in taking. And this action of the will can be put forth here and now. There is no need of delay. The sinner can go down to his house justified; the neglectful Christian may return to his Saviour; the faithful but desponding servant of Christ may be filled with all the fulness of God. Have we been bound with legalistic fetters, fancying that we must work out our own salvation? Why not remember the other side of the truth, that it is God who works in us, even to will and to work of his good pleasure, and that our very desires are pledges that he is with us here and now to save? What we most need is, not more effort on our part, but more willingness to let Christ do for us. Our one great prayer should be: "Lord, increase our faith."

For faith is God's measure of a man. Let us not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, judging ourselves by our natural intelligence or our worldly means or our social position, but let us think soberly, according as God has dealt to each man a measure of faith. In God's sight it matters little how much intellect or wealth or influence we may possess. He is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham, and he can take the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. But God does value faith, because faith is the hand that lays hold of God, the heart that receives God, the medium through which God can communicate to man his wisdom, his love, and his power. Faith is a fact of life; it is incapable of definition; it is the merging of the finite in the infinite, and the joining of the little bay along the shore to the measureless pulses of the sea. Faith can do wonders, because it joins us to God. The faith that is as a grain of mustard-seed can remove obstacles like mountains, because it falls in with the divine purpose and furnishes a channel for the divine power.

However weak we may naturally be, and however limited our sphere may seem, there is offered to us in faith the means of making our lives sublime. Out from the secrecy of many a humble closet of prayer there have gone forth revival influences to quicken the church of God, and reforming influences to revolutionize the world. The power that subdued pagan Rome and made it Christian was the power of prayer. The power that brought the papacy to the feet of Luther and opened to Protestantism the modern world was the power of prayer. The power that is now moving upon the nations, and sending the gospel into the lands of heathen darkness, is the power of prayer. And its power is not exhausted; it is only beginning its triumphs; and all because prayer is the vehicle and fruit of faith, the faith that realizes that, apart from Christ, we can do nothing, but also realizes that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Not so very long ago President Roosevelt touched a gold button in the East Room of the White House, at Washington, and set in motion all the machinery of the great World's Fair at St. Louis. How came it that a single man of finite powers could bridge that great interval of space, and could accomplish results which a thousand giants never could produce? Only because of the all-encompassing, all-pervading forces of electricity and magnetism, which bind together not only St. Louis and Washington, but all places and all times. The God in whom we live and move and have our being connects all human souls, as well as all material things, and, weak and ignorant as we are, the least of us is endowed with authority, greater than that of President Roosevelt, by faith and prayer, to touch the springs of human action and to inaugurate movements in history, compared with which the starting of that machinery in St. Louis was but child's play. We are not presidents, but we are more than that—we are kings and priests unto God, seated upon the throne with Christ, instruments through whom Christ works, endowed with Christ's power. In view, then, of all that faith may accomplish, let us sing: "This is the day which Jehovah hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

I invited you at the beginning to think of Present Values, or the Value of the Present Day. I have tried to show you, first, that God's attributes of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence, his infinite holiness and his changeless love, make this day a day of his working equally with any day in all the past; secondly, that God's method of evolution makes it demonstrable that this is the best day of all thus far in human history; thirdly, that the promises of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether uttered by himself in the flesh or after his resurrection by the apostles, assure us that all the fulness of God is in him for our present need, to make this day the mightiest day of his working; and, fourthly, that the faith which links us to him actually connects us with Him who is the source of wisdom and power, and makes us equal to every work to which he calls us to set our hands. With all this opening to us of the infinite treasure of God's grace and love, why should we longer remain in the darkness and impotence of our past unbelief?

We may receive to-day more than we have ever in our lives received before. Every humblest corner in our homes, if made the scene of prevailing prayer, may send out influences that shall subdue hard hearts and bring the world to the feet of Christ. Every little occasion that is offered us to speak a word of simple confession of Christ's name may be made great, because Christ himself makes it his message, and no word of his is devoid of power. No one of us knows the extent of his influence. We do our little work, and we seem to accomplish nothing. But our influence is like the balls of snow which the boys roll up in the early spring. The mass grows as it rolls. After it leaves our hands, the Master keeps it rolling on. In the

Judgment, while the wicked say: "When saw we thee an hungred and gave thee no meat?" the righteous ask: "When saw we thee an hungred and fed thee?" They cannot see that they did any good. But Christ replies: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." And the faithful servant shall be amazed at the great harvest which his little seed-sowing has produced under the tillage of the great Husbandman. "Fear not," then, "thou worm, Jacob; thou shalt thresh mountains."

With the present God, the present Christ, the present Holy Spirit, the present salvation, the present opportunity, the present power to improve it, why should we wait for times of revival? Let us now awake, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give us light. This, indeed, is the first resurrection, the resurrection of faith and love, the bringing in the tithes into the storehouse that shall insure the opening of the windows of heaven, so that a blessing shall descend like the flood of Noah, not to destroy, but to recreate the sinful earth. Why wait for the millennium, when we may have the spiritual second coming of Christ here and now in our hearts? It will be vain for us to wait for the outward resurrection or the visible second coming, unless the inward and invisible reception of Christ has gone before. Why wait for heaven, when heaven begins on earth? This is eternal life that we may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and he that believeth on the Son already hath eternal life. A present God, and a present salvation, and a present heaven of joy and peace and power in Christ our Saviour, enable us to join with him, even before our death, yes, even here and now, in singing, as he sang before he suffered: "This is the day that Jehovah hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

XXXV

LITTLE THINGS[1]

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. (Luke 16:10.)

LITTLE things—their influence in matters of religion, this is the theme suggested by the text. I suppose we should all agree that little things are the best *signs* of character. Straws thrown into the air show which way the wind blows much better than the throwing up of bullets or cannon-balls. In great things we have more thought of others, we are moved more by surrounding influences. In little things there is not the same possibility of concealment; we must sometimes forget, and then we act ourselves. You cannot form half so safe a judgment of a young man's goodness of heart from his politeness in company as you can from his everyday treatment of his mother at home. Women's opinions of women are generally more correct than men's, because they see their sisters when less under the influence of conventional proprieties, and so are better able to mark those little things of conduct which most fully manifest the inner disposition. It is not so much by a man's words in the prayer meeting as by the tenor of his common talk that the world judges him. God recognizes and follows the same rule, when he declares that "every idle word shall be brought into the judgment." It shall be brought into the judgment because it will afford the best index of the heart.

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[1] A sermon preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Rochester, N. Y., May 26, 1889.

It is a generally acknowledged fact that as a man does in little things, so he will do in great. This is an unconscious inference from the other fact just mentioned, that in little things the prevailing disposition is most apt to manifest itself. In general and in the long run men follow their prevailing dispositions. If you were going to select a missionary for some hard foreign field you would not take the youth of romantic dreams, whose mind had reveled in visions of some vast work of Christian conquest. You would greatly prefer some one who had proved the reality of his faith and zeal, by calm and straightforward work for Christ and the church in the humble sphere God had already assigned him.

Every merchant chooses his confidential clerk or his junior partner on some such principle. He never takes an unreliable, unpunctual, inattentive employee as his chief assistant, with the idea that the new position may change these habits of his. He rightly argues that faithfulness in a subordinate place is the only surety for faithfulness in a higher one. The character that has shown its weakness and inefficiency in the humbler sphere will not change in a day, merely because its surroundings have changed. The bookkeeper whose cash account lacks twenty-five cents of balancing shows himself a very incompetent and untrustworthy bookkeeper when he charges the twenty-five cents to sundries, instead of hunting up his error. It is utterly hopeless to think of making that boy a scholar who is perfectly content to put up with a trifling inaccuracy, when, with a little labor, he could set himself right. True honesty is not consistent with even slight evasions of truth. True holiness abhors even the appearance of sin. "True faithfulness," in the words of another, "has its ground not in the greatness of the matter in which it is displayed, but in the conscientious conviction of duty in him who exercises it. He that lacks it in the less will not show it in the greater. He who has it will count nothing unworthy of his attention, whether it be great or small."

So much about little things as *signs* of character. It is by these, and not by great things, that we mainly judge of others. This fact should of itself convince us that little things are by no means unimportant. But I wish to show you that they are more important still because of their influence in forming character.

Have you ever seen what is called infusorial earth? The city of Richmond, Va., is built upon a deposit of such earth, many feet in thickness. Examine that earth with a magnifying-glass and you find it composed of the silicious shells of myriads of diatoms. The countless host of lower organisms that swarmed in the ancient waters have left their flinty coverings as a stony foundation for the life and history of man. Creatures of infinitesimal size, they were yet, in the aggregate, equal to the work of building up a substratum on which a city could be built. One by one they lived and died, all unconscious of the use they were to serve; but men profit in these after ages by their lives and stand in wonder before the work which they accomplished. Every little act of our lives is like one of those diatoms, it leaves something behind it—sometimes a deposit of good, ofttimes a deposit of evil. And just as a microscopic examination of that infusorial earth shows to-day the precise forms of those beautiful, but tiny, creatures that lived ages ago, so God's eye, if not man's eye, might see every good man's character to be the sum and product of ten thousand times ten thousand definite words and thoughts and deeds, which separately were considered insignificant. Of all true souls it may be said at last: "They builded better than they knew." They had no notion that their every breath was to stamp itself into character; but lo! while they thought themselves building for time, they found themselves building for eternity.

It may be doubted, indeed, whether the great emergencies of life, with their opportunities for grand emotions and grand acts, have anything like the influence upon us that is exercised by the small ones. These great emergencies come but seldom. The lives of many are marked by none of them. If character is formed at all, it must be by accretions almost insensible. Who would ever think of acquiring good manners by some sudden leap? You cannot change the boor into the gentleman in a moment. The rough and ugly spirit may be changed in a moment by the grace of God, but facility and propriety in the expression of that spirit—that is something gained slowly and only by constant watchfulness and practice. It is not great things, but little things, constantly accumulating, that make the polished and cultured man.

How slight the means are by which you preserve life and health from day to day! It is by the daily taking of food and exercise, and generally in small quantities, that vigor and strength are kept. None of us eats a whole ox at once. None of us can take in air enough at one time to last us for a whole week. The law of nature is the frequent taking of air and food, and of no great amount at once. So the religious life is dependent upon daily and hourly reception of the bread of life into our souls. A little Scripture every day, a quarter hour regularly devoted to secret prayer, a word for Christ dropped in the ear of a friend, a little regular work done for God and souls in the Sabbath-school, or in visitation of the poor—these are the things that tell on character, that confirm faith and make it strong, that make religion and life identical. But, on the other hand, little indulgences oft repeated are the things that make religion unreal to us, fill us with doubts as to our acceptance with God, lead us to shirk all earnest work for Christ, sap the very life of our Christianity.

We should not forget, either, that little things often lead to greater. God's providence generally prepares us for great sacrifices and great labors and great triumphs by little sacrifices and little labors and little triumphs. His most successful servants have been commonly educated in the school of humble and unnoticed toil and trial. Only after they have served an apprenticeship of self-discipline and perseverance and faith, does he permit them to see the obstacles to their work disappear, and the morning of victory dawn. And just so, little sins are the preparation for greater. Little neglects make ready the final denial of Him who bought us. The way to the abyss of ruin is paved by transgressions that seemed almost trivial. All sin tends to multiply itself. The heathen writer said: " Whoever yet was content with one sin?" And when Linnæus, the botanist, declared that three flesh flies, with their amazing powers of self-multiplication, would devour the carcass of a horse as quickly as would a lion, he gave a symbol of a terrible truth in the moral world. He who admits to his bosom one darling sin, however hidden and seemingly insignificant, has no security that this sin, with its progeny, will not devour him. A single hole in the levee of the Mississippi will let the waters through, though only drop by drop comes through at first; each drop will wear the channel larger, till the stream becomes a rivulet, then a river, and the flood covers and devastates the whole country round. But whether fast or slow, the law is the same. Sin grows by what it feeds on; it is self-propagating—the least sin indulged and cherished brings ruin.

If religion teaches us anything, it is the value of trifles. " Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost" has a world of significance in it. It is only the old law of political economy that all wealth is the result of saving. It is not what we spend, but what we save, that makes us rich. Every great fortune began in caring for the little. It makes no difference how small it was at first. Economy and thrift can make it in the end a million. One cent put at compound interest will in time be a mine of wealth to its possessor. And religion is styled by Christ himself a "laying up treasure." Every true thought, every emotion of humility, trust, worship, every deed of submission, benevolence, forgiveness, is so much added to our heavenly treasure, if it be only exercised in God's appointed way through Christ and in conscious dependence upon Christ. Not one of them all shall lose its reward. But, on the other hand, every little deviation from the path marked out by conscience and Scripture is a wasting of our substance, a casting of so much heavenly treasure into the sea. There is not only a laying up of treasure in heaven, but a "treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

And so the best evidence of Christian progress and of the reality of our Christian life is to be found in a growing faithfulness in little things. In certain great things ordinary self-respect may keep us true to our covenant, but only the love of Christ within the heart is a sufficiently constant force to keep us minutely true and honest. When I see a new convert unwilling to do small duties and always on the lookout for large ones, I tremble for him. He is called to *live* for Christ, and life is not made up of large duties half so much as it is of small. He who has no conscience about small matters can never live for Christ at all. And there is no sign of growth more cheering in a Christian than his determination to honor Christ, not on set occasions simply, but in the thoughts of every hour as it flies, and in those minor matters of family and social life in which most men are conscious of no responsibility. Increasing sensitiveness of conscience, enlarged views of obligation, willingness to do humble work for Jesus—these are the true tests of Christian advancement. How is it? Do you find, as months go by, that your performance of public and private duty becomes more regular and punctual and conscientious? Do rainy Sabbaths keep you less from the house of God than they used to? Do wandering thoughts in prayer come less often, and when they do come, trouble you more? Do worldly enjoyments seem less attractive, and does your real happiness rest more entirely in God than it did years ago? Do you look less to others for your standard of duty and more to God's word and the example of Jesus? Are you more anxious that every day should see something, however slight, done for your own advance in holiness, for the salvation of souls, for the honor of God? Are you more and more conscious of living under the eye of God and of being personally responsible to God? Do you feel every year that your interests and the interests of God's church are identical, that the prosperity of the church depends upon you, that the relation of membership in the church makes every one belonging to it a brother or sister to you, for whose spiritual peace and prosperity you are to pray, for whose growth in grace and usefulness you are to labor, by kind words, by visits of Christian love, by public exhortation, by private sympathy in their several griefs and trials? These are none of them great duties; they are the little, common things of

Christian life; they are on that very account the best tests of our Christian state. Let us judge ourselves by these, for by them we shall be judged. I trust that many of us can fairly say that the application of these tests shows that the past few years have been a gain to us and not a loss. But if it be not so, let us face the truth. Let us not think that some great thing we have done can balance the evidence which these little things bring against us. Regularity, punctuality, conscientiousness, fidelity to Christ and his church in little things, these are the tests of character. For it is Christ himself that says: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

I would that I could reach those who are impenitent to-day and convince them how important are those seeming trifles that keep them away from Christ. It is some sin, my friends, that ties you to the world and prevents you from being saved; and unless that sin be broken up, you have no hope of salvation. A long time ago I had a room in a hotel by the seaside. From my window I could see many a bright-colored boat floating on the waves. But there was one that never moved from its place. The tide came and went twice a day. The boat rose and fell with the rising and falling of the water. When the tide went out, it seemed as if it must float out on the current that swept so grandly out to sea. I wondered why it was so motionless, so utterly unaffected by the streaming in and out of the water around it. One day I found the secret. A cord no thicker than your little finger tied it to a buoy just beneath the surface. If that cord had only been cut by a penknife stroke the boat would have been free to obey the strong influences that urged it from its place. But it was fast; the little cord was as good as a ship's cable; until that was severed all movement was impossible. It is so with the sinner. The tide of religious influence around him comes and goes. He is moved by it more or less, as the boat is lifted and then falls again, but times of religious interest come and go, and he is just where he was before. Why is it? Ah, there is a cord that holds him, and that cord of pride or self-seeking or sensual appetite or worldly plans or bad associates he will not cut. The Spirit draws him; once loosed from his sins by a sharp decision of the will and he might be borne outward and onward into the measureless ocean of God's love and peace, but he delays—he is bound to the earth, he is a captive of Satan. It seems a little thing that hinders him from obeying the gospel, but that little thing may be a chain to keep him out of heaven through all eternity.

And yet it is not because this one sin is the only sin, that giving it up is so important. There are many sins, but this is the one to which the soul clings and where the stand is made against God. It is the point of the wedge, itself thin and apparently insignificant, but backed up by the whole sin of the heart and life. Break this point and all opposition ofttimes ceases. How often the convicted sinner seems willing to surrender all but one thing to God. Everything else apparently ready to be given up, but one cherished friendship, one darling plan of life, one scheme of gain, one secret sin, one unforgiving feeling, must be kept. And in that one reservation all the strength of the will entrenches and fortifies itself; there the whole being is arrayed in rebellion and war against God. While that position is not surrendered, nothing is surrendered. Though it may seem a small reserve, it is a keeping back of all. O my friends, how much you need to remember that no sin can be small! No sin can be other than infinitely great that prevents your submission to God and your acceptance of Jesus Christ. Count no sin little, since the least sin that prevents you from believing the gospel and living for God will work the death of the soul. It is all one whether you are drowned near the shore or in the depths of the sea. And it will be all one whether you have committed one sin or many, so long as the result is that you are drowned in perdition.

It is one of the greatest blessings of the gospel that it makes salvation turn on little things. It is just so in all critical maladies. When you are deadly sick it is oftenest the slight addition of good care, the faithful attention to minute directions, the putting of the case quickly and implicitly into the physician's hands that decides how the case will turn. I have known mothers to mourn all their lives that they gave one prescription wrongly, because it cost the life of a child. And if there is anything that will cause mourning throughout eternity to the lost, it will be that with the best of all physicians for the soul, and the most specific and simple directions in his word, they persisted in thinking themselves the best judges of the case, and so died in their sins. A little humility, a little submission, a little trust might have saved them; a little pride, a little obstinacy, a little unholy passion, a little needless delay proved the grave of all their hopes. But shall their fate make the mercy of God any the less conspicuous, that mercy which prefixes no other condition to salvation but this one: "Come unto me"? You think the way too narrow? But is it not a mercy to the blinded and wandering sinner that there are not a hundred ways for him to perplex himself about and choose between, but only one way? Is it not a blessing that a plain declaration is made to all that "there is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved"? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"—that is a little thing—I thank God that it is so little; if it had been any harder or more difficult to comprehend, I might never have been able to comply with the condition, and so I might never have been saved.

Is there one here to-day who has been hesitating and doubting and holding back, because it seemed so incomprehensible and impossible a thing to become a Christian? See, friend, how simple and easy is the way. It is a little thing that is required of you—simply to submit your soul to Jesus and trust him for all you need. It is a straight gate and a narrow way, but it leadeth unto life. It opens before you at the very spot on which you stand. Nay, Christ himself is by you, ready to lead you through and lead you ever after, for he is not only the door into this sheepfold, but also the shepherd of the sheep. I am sure that if you but do this little thing, trust your whole soul to Jesus, all else will be involved in it; your faith, sinner as you are, will be counted for righteousness; a new principle of life will begin to work within you, gradually transforming your whole nature; and a holy life here and a blessed existence hereafter will prove the truth of Jesus' words, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."

One thought more will complete what I have to say: We do not see the full importance of little things until we realize the meaning of the word "probation." Have you ever pondered the truth that actual results in this life are not the chief thing—but that the chief thing is the determination of what we are fit for hereafter? This world is only a place for the trial and manifestation of our characters. Some people object that it is absurd to suppose that the sins of a little lifetime are to be visited with an eternity of punishment, or that the little faith and love of these passing years are to be rewarded with an eternity of glory. But suppose we leave out all idea of reward and punishment and look at life as a simple opportunity to show what we are and where we belong—to form our habits and tastes, to make up the whole tone of our characters, with reference to a future state of existence. In the system at West Point we do not object that the young cadet's course decides his arm of the service thereafter. It is a very brief time to decide for a whole life whether he is to devote himself to mathematics and bridge-building, or whether he is to be an officer of cavalry. But it is perfectly fair. His tastes and proficiency during those five years show as well where he belongs as forty years would. Do you suppose those antediluvian sinners, Lamech and Cain, would have been any better off if their probation had been lengthened from five hundred to one thousand or ten thousand years? Ah, no; character is formed long before fifty years are past.

The little acts of a brief lifetime may show where a man's place is, quite as well as if he lived the whole lifetime of the earth. Aye, one act may determine a whole future, and reveal the depths of character. Adam's one sin showed his mind toward God and what, without God's grace, would have been his character for eternity. My friends, there will be nothing arbitrary about the divine decisions. Just as the early apostles, released from prison, went at once to their own company, just so each of us will go to his own company when the great doors of the other world open before us. It will not need any fiat of the Judge to send Judas to his own place, nor Paul to his. The little things of life will have decided that already. The true lover of God and humble follower of Christ never can be cheated of his inheritance, for with powers cleared from all the effects of sin and sublimated for stronger and holier flights, it will be only in accordance with natural law that the Judge shall say: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." Nor can he who has been unfaithful here, by any artifice or chance, escape his proper inheritance. Never allow yourself to believe, my brother, that you can live as the worldling lives, live as if God were blind and Christ were a myth, and yet, by a little cheap repentance on your deathbed, stand as high and be as well off beyond the flood, as if you had lived like a Payson or a Paul. No! no! God is not mocked—" whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." The things you think so little of are deciding whether your place there shall be among those of whom it is said that " His servants shall serve him," or among those unprofitable servants who are cast into the outer darkness. I beseech you, then, to examine this matter of little things in the light of eternity. Remember that stupendous scene, which all of us are one day to witness, whose outlines Christ has sketched with so vivid pencil, that scene where the " Come, ye blessed of my Father " is based upon " Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren," and the solemn doom, " Depart, ye cursed," is grounded on this all-sufficient reason, " Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me." Blessed be God, that while the little things of life shall determine the everlasting punishment of the wicked, the little things done for Christ and for souls shall determine the true destiny of the righteous to be life eternal.

XXXVI

OPEN VISION[1]

The word of Jehovah was precious (or rare) in those days: there was no open (or frequent) vision. (1 Sam. 3:1.)

That was a dark time in Israel. There was no settled government. Anarchy exposed the people to the assaults of the heathen round about them. Idolatry deprived them of the one religious principle which might have given them unity and courage. Without faith in God, they were left a prey to their enemies. The tabernacle indeed remained, but old Eli, with his two reckless and licentious sons, showed how impotent mere ceremonialism is to stay the tide of human passion and selfishness.

But God had pity upon the apostate nation. He desires to communicate himself to men. Like the all-surrounding atmosphere he presses into our lives, and wherever there is an empty nook or crevice, he will enter in. Most of us are so full of our own concerns that we leave no room for God. It is only the simple, the humble, the childlike, that receive him. It seemed as if in Israel there was only one such receptive nature. It was the little Samuel. In the darkness of the night God spoke to him. The things that were hidden from the wise and prudent were revealed unto a babe. And so began a long line of prophets, and there was at length open vision of God and his truth.

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[1] A sermon preached in the Parsells Avenue Baptist Church, Rochester. N. Y., at the ordination of Samuel F. Langford, September 13, 1904.

I wish to take this phrase "open vision," and make it the foundation of a discourse on God's communications to men. Let us notice, first, man's great need of open vision. We appreciate very highly our need of insight into the laws of nature and the characters of our fellow-men; for without knowledge of gravitation we might fearlessly walk over the precipice, and without knowledge of human iniquity we might innocently put ourselves into the clutches of the villain. But to know God is more needful still, for without knowing him we cannot properly understand ourselves or anything else. The soul is made for God, and it is restless until it finds rest in him. That is a beautiful picture in the book of Genesis of man's unfallen condition—the loving pair walking with God in the garden, as little children with their father, listening to his words, protected by his presence, obedient to his will. All the subsequent history of the good is an effort to get back to Eden. Moses prays: "I beseech thee, show me thy glory!" Job cried: "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" David pleads: "Hide not thy face from me!" Only in Jesus is the lost vision of God perfectly restored.

Conscience is not enough. That has been left as God's witness in the soul, since the sense of his personal presence has ceased. But conscience can only warn. The mandatory element cannot overcome the influence of strong temptation, nor answer the sophistries that make the worse appear the better reason.

The Bible is not enough. Even though it is the record of God's past revelations, it may become a merely external word that has no power to quicken the dead soul. Some power is needed that can turn the outer word into an inner word, with power to move and melt the heart. Preaching is not enough, and ordinances are not enough, and churches are not enough. What we need is living contact with God himself, personal intercourse with the Father of our spirits. Conscience and Bible and preaching and ordinances and churches are valuable, just so far as they prepare the way for our own access to God, but they fail of their purpose if they bring us only to the gate of the temple and leave us without the open vision.

Notice, secondly, that there are times when this open vision is peculiarly needed. In the book of Proverbs the wise man tells us that where there is no vision the people perish. Vision—by which I mean the apprehension of God's presence and the understanding of his will—is the only thing that can keep either the individual or the community or the nation from moral deterioration. Things will never go of themselves unless they are running down-hill. There is a downward gravitation of our nature which nothing but the sight of God and the motives drawn from the unseen world can ever counteract. Plato speaks of "that blind, many-headed wild beast of all that is evil within thee." The blindness is not so much the cause of sin as it is the result of sin. Sin is an opiate that takes away our powers of moral perception, and the more we sin the more blind we become to the real nature of our condition or to the danger of it.

Physicians tell us that some of the most deadly diseases do not reveal themselves in the patient's countenance, nor has the patient any adequate consciousness of his malady.

Some years ago I visited an asylum for the blind. As I inspected their recitation-rooms and saw their eagerness to learn, I felt thankful for the new science that was providing books with raised letters, and was permitting touch to be substituted for sight. And when I saw hundreds of those sightless human beings gathered in the great lecture hall, and waiting silently for some word to be spoken to them, it was a privilege to utter that word. But when, a little time after, I heard of the burning of a similar asylum, and of the frantic groping of the poor blind children toward the fire-escapes when the stairways were cut off by the smoke, I realized as never before the misery of those who have eyes, but who cannot see. In the Old Testament, the king of Syria sent horses and chariots and a great host to encompass the city of Dothan and capture Elisha the prophet. Elisha prayed Jehovah to smite the army with blindness, and the prophet led that blind host into the very midst of their enemies. It was a mercy to them, for food and drink was put before them and they were set free. But Satan sometimes blinds a whole people, only to destroy them. They sink into immorality or give themselves up to commercial gambling, or go out on wars of conquest, because they lack the vision of God and have no fear of God before their eyes.

A third truth which I would have you notice is this: God restores his people by giving the open vision to a few. The darkest part of the night is just before the dawn. When the enemy comes in like a flood the Lord lifts up a standard against him. God never leaves himself without a witness. Somewhere, in the most godless times, can be found those who love and serve God. Elijah may fancy that he alone is left to stand for the truth among a nation of idolaters, but God shows him that he has yet seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal. And God makes this very Elijah the beginning of a second line of prophets, that holds on through Elisha and Ezekiel even to Malachi and John the Baptist. At the very time that the army of the king of Syria is stricken with blindness, supernatural vision is granted to Elisha's servant, and the young man's eyes are opened; he sees, and, behold! the mountain is full of horses and chariots of fire round about his master.

So, in every dark day in the history of his people, God wakens some chosen servant of his to see what the common crowd are blind to. And this it is to be a prophet. The prophet is one lifted up in spirit so that he gets God's point of view, sees the things of the present under the form of eternity, descries truths which to his contemporaries are yet below the horizon. It does not follow that he will be able to predict the future, though to know the spiritual significance of the present is to have premonitions of things to come. But he will see the relations of the present life to God, and so will be able to speak words which go to the heart of present needs. It does not follow that he will be able to give new communications of truth—John the Baptist only interpreted Isaiah. But he recognized the fulfilment of Isaiah in the Christ, and he pointed his disciples to the Lamb of God. In this sense there is such a thing as New Testament prophecy. Luther and Wesley were prophets of this sort; themselves waked up to behold wondrous things out of God's law, and commissioned to wake up the whole generation in which each of them lived. Thank God, the goodly fellowship of the prophets is not yet extinct. The line that began with Samuel and Elijah still continues to bless the world. Every modern preacher who gets his message in the secret place of the Most High, and comes to men with an overmastering conviction of its pressing importance, is an organ of God's revelation and a means in God's hands of opening men's blind eyes to see the truth whose acceptance or rejection is a matter of life or death eternal.

There is a fourth truth which I would have you consider. It is this: The open vision lays upon those few who experience it a heavy burden. The immediate effect is prostration before the majesty of God, and self-abasement in view of their own impurity and unworthiness. Job cries: "I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." When Isaiah beholds the Lord sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up, he takes to himself the language of the leper, and calls himself unclean. But, with eyes opened to see God's purity and glory, the next feeling is deep compassion for the blindness and lost condition of men. They seem like sheep without a shepherd, wandering on the dark mountains and hastening to ruin. The sense of their guilt is mingled with pity and love, so that the prophet identifies himself with those who are perishing, and, like Moses, makes their case his own. Yet, even then, there is shrinking, and fear to deliver God's message. The child Samuel dares not tell Eli the solemn oracle, until the aged high priest forces it from his lips. Every true prophet of God has said with Jeremiah: "I know not how to speak, for I am a child." The Spirit of God reproduces in the prophet God's own suffering on account of sin, and God's own compassion for the lost, so that he is ready to say with Paul: "I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Every man who has the vision of God will agonize over the sin and misery of the world, will know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, will have his own Gethsemane.

But with this burden there will be a heavenly joy, an assurance of the redeeming love of God, and an irresistible impulse to tell to others what he has seen and heard. The word of the Lord becomes as fire shut up in his bones, and he cannot withhold the utterance of it. "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel," is the feeling of his heart. As he has freely received, so he must freely give. He knows that his message will be a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death, and that it will make a higher heaven for those who are saved and a deeper hell for those who perish. But it is glad tidings still, the very word of God, and he must proclaim it, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. The watchman must give his warning. If the wicked man turn not from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but the watchman has delivered his soul.

There is a fifth and last thought: When a man has had the open vision, his message is not delivered in vain. Merely human words may pall upon the sense and waken no response. But the vision of God qualifies a man so to speak that others are compelled to listen for their lives. "A mechanically moved corpse," it has been said, "is a poor substitute for a living personality." The preacher or the Christian who lacks the vision of God is but a corpse. He is as powerless to move others as were those bones in the valley that Ezekiel saw. Only the Spirit of God can put life into him. But let the vision dawn upon a man, and he becomes a new creature. He becomes conscious of new powers and of new impulses to action. He has the key to human hearts and he knows how to use it. The same Peter who a little time ago denied his Master is now endowed with the power of Christ, and is enabled to preach with such boldness that three thousand are converted in one day.

In wireless telegraphy everything depends upon perfectly attuning the transmitter and the receiver. Just as a tuning-fork in one corner of the room will set vibrating a second tuning-fork in the other corner, provided only that the two have precisely the same pitch, so Marconi produces vibrations a thousand miles away by setting up similar vibrations close at hand. It is the symbol of spiritual influences.

Down in the human heart crushed by the tempter
Feelings lie buried which grace may restore;
Touched by a gentle hand, wakened by kindness,
Chords that were silent will vibrate once more.

The man who has the open vision and comes into living connection with God has his deeper nature quickened so that its vibrations produce like vibrations in all who hear his message. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin," and when the soul is on fire with God it can stir other souls with its own emotions and can compel an audience. The genuine song of the poet and the genuine eloquence of the orator appeal to the universal in man. But he who has had the vision of God reaches men at deeper depths than either of these, by just so much as the infinite exceeds the finite and eternity is a greater concern than time.

There is no more striking illustration than that which is furnished by the great Scotch preacher, Doctor Chalmers. In his younger days he preached at Kilmany an emasculated gospel, which was not the gospel of Christ, but a mere republication of the law of nature. Christ's death, he declared, has furnished an affecting example of self-sacrifice; now all men need is to live a life of virtue. But the results of his ministry seemed but trifling; men paid but little heed to his message; they neglected the church; they sank deeper every day in immorality. Then a brother, a sister, an uncle of his, died, in quick succession. A long sickness prostrated him. At length, in sorrow and pain and utter weakness, God gave him the open vision. The things of time shrank to their proper insignificance. Eternity and God loomed up before him with such startling vividness as to exclude all thought of earthly ambition. He became a new man. He began to preach the new truth which he had experienced. He exposed the guilt of men's ungodliness and its fearful issue in a ruined eternity. He urged the all-embracing love of God and the saving grace of Jesus Christ with such vehemence and energy that to unspiritual hearers it seemed like insanity. But the new love and zeal were like a revelation from heaven. The fame of them spread far and wide. The church was crowded with eager listeners. Men went out from his preaching to pray and to give themselves to God. His vision of God was the means of stirring not only Scotland, but the world.

And now, before I close this sermon, there are two solemn questions which I wish to ask. One is this: Is our time a time of open vision, or is the word of Jehovah rare in our days? I am not talking now about Bibles or Sunday-schools or even about preachers. There are a plenty of them all. The external means and instruments and observances are all here, far more of them, indeed, than there ever were in the age of Eli. But this is the question: How many are there of ministers or of private Christians who have the open vision of God, who keep in living communication with Christ, who are led by his Spirit, who are supernaturally enlightened to know his will and to make it known to others? Isaiah could say: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." How many are there now who hear God's voice, calling to them as it called to Samuel in the watches of the night, and giving to them his solemn message to the Elis of the church and to the unfaithful people of God? Have not the material progress of our time, the riches, the luxury, the science falsely so called, almost quenched the fires of devotion, so that the days of great revivals, of family prayer, of secret communion with God, are largely things of the past—things that we read about, and wonder at, and sometimes—God help us!—smile at, as antiquated and narrow and superstitious? Are we not a great company of Laodiceans, and does not Christ's word come to us: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see." Must not we preachers confess that too much of our preaching has been the repetition of forms of words, words that once meant something, but from which the spirit and life and power have departed? Are we not too often "prophets who find no vision from the Lord," and are content to have it so? May not we too, say to the Lord: "None stirreth up himself to take hold on thee"? Have not the days come of "famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah"? And is not the result of this lack of witness that the worldly man "will not seek God, and God is not in all his thoughts"? And because we withhold our witness, will not the wicked man die in his iniquity, and will not God require his blood at our hand?

There is one question more: Who of us wills to have the open vision, and wills then to declare it? Who of us sets himself to be a messenger of God to this generation? Who of us will take the vision, with its burden and its suffering, with its exaltation and its joy? Who will listen to the still small voice that silences ambition, rejects wealth, crushes the flesh with its affections and lusts, discloses the secrets of eternity, whispers a message

So gotten of the immediate soul,
So instant from the vital Fount of things
Which is our Source and Goal,

that whosoever hears it repeated doubts not that through the words of the human preacher or teacher he has heard the words of the living God to his soul, that word which shall judge him at the last day? Who wills to be a prophet of God? As in wireless telegraphy, the whole atmosphere may be throbbing with vibrations which only one attuned receiver can understand, so the universe is pulsating with God's communications of his love and grace, but only the heart in harmony with him can receive them. Is God silent to us? Ah, the silence is not in God, but in our inability to hear. We have had the vision,—we have heard the voice. But we have treated the voice as if it were the voice of man. We have been disobedient to the heavenly vision. And so we have become blind to the vision and deaf to the voice.

Let this be so no longer! When the vision comes to us, as it came to Saul, may we ask in all submission: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" When we hear the voice that Isaiah heard from above the cherubim, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" let us reply: "Here am I; send me." When spiritual darkness covers the land and gross darkness the people, the call of God even to a little child may be one of the momentous facts of history, the signal of a new epoch in the kingdom of God, the beginning of open vision for all God's people, the trumpet-call to Zion: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee." My halting, stammering, weak, and unhappy brother in the ministry, half deaf and half blind as you feel yourself to be, God calls to you to-night, as he called of old: "Samuel! Samuel!" Submit yourself to God in childlike simplicity and faith; say to him, as Samuel did, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth!" and you too shall have the open vision, and shall be established to be a prophet of the Lord. Christ is the great prophet, and the man who joins himself to Christ shall be not only a prophet, but also a priest and a king.

XXXVII

OBEDIENCE BEFORE KNOWLEDGE[1]

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:17.)

THERE are many perplexed and doubting persons to-day who require this same prescription for their difficulties that Jesus gave to the Jews. Obedience before knowledge, that is the divine order. Do the mysteries of religion confound your reason? Submit yourself to God and follow his precepts; you shall learn all that you need to know. Is the path of duty hard to find? Let your will be set to do the will of God and the path of duty shall be made plain to you. Only an obedient spirit—that is the teaching of Christ—only an obedient spirit can ever become possessed of spiritual truth. Obey and you shall know. Now. this is not a demand of unreasoning obedience; this is not a swallowing down of things incomprehensible; this is not a taking for granted of the questions in dispute; it is only saying in other words that none but a heart humble, reverent, submissive, loving toward God can ever understand God or the ways of God. Two or three simple considerations will make this plain.

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[1] A baccalaureate sermon, preached at Denison University, Granville, Ohio, June 23, 1873.

First, *the obedient spirit is the only spirit that is willing to learn.* There is a certain knowledge of God's existence which we possess by nature. But the most of our knowledge about God's attributes and dealings is an acquired knowledge. And in the acquisition of that knowledge nothing hinders us so much as the assumption that we know already. In coming to know of God there is nothing we need so much as a humble confession of our ignorance and a willingness to put ourselves in the place of learners. We never can know, so long as we assume that we know already, and refuse to put ourselves under a teacher.

He who would know anything of God's truth, then, must cease from being a teacher and be content to learn. He must humble his pride of opinion and put away his prejudices. He must confess God to be his Master and not fancy that he is God's master. He must acknowledge himself to be a child for ignorance and weakness, and so must take many things at first at his Father's word, in hope that by and by he may come to understand them for himself. There is an alphabet in every science which must be learned first; there are things at the beginning which must be taken on faith; somewhere we must believe before we can know; the trustworthiness of our faculties, the truthfulness of parents and teachers, these we must take for granted at the start. And it is not different in religion. If we would know anything of religion we must put ourselves under the direction of God. The very alphabet of religion is obedience to God, as he is revealed in conscience, in providence, in his word. Obey God's plain directions, those which you know already—and you will be led on to higher and wider knowledge. Refuse to obey, and no higher and wider knowledge will ever dawn upon your soul.

Consider, secondly, that *the obedient spirit is the only medium of insight into religious truth.* We need to remember that all true knowledge of spiritual things is a practical heart knowledge, as distinguished from the knowledge of the intellect, and this is utterly impossible except to the heart that loves God and obeys God. There are certain sorts of knowledge that depend upon a state of the sensibilities, the affections, the tastes. It is absurd for a man to say that he can know and describe an orange simply by using his sense of sight. To know the orange he must taste it as well. It is absurd for a man to say that he can know the beauty of a sunset by mere logical process. Unless he has an æsthetic sense he can never see beauty or know beauty, for seeing beauty depends on a love for the beautiful. You cannot really appreciate a noble character without having a love for goodness. The power of seeing the morally right depends on having a love for the morally right. *Sapientia*, wisdom, is derived from *sapere,* to taste. "Oh taste and see that Jehovah is good!" Without having a taste for truth you cannot know the truth. And so you cannot know God without loving God. "The pure in heart," they, and they only, "shall see God." Pascal said truly that human things need only to be known in order to be loved, but divine things must first be loved in order to be known. Therefore, you can place no dependence whatever on the religious opinions of an ungodly man.

The absence of love to God will vitiate all his conclusions with respect to God.

A few years ago a piece of plastering fell from the wall of the refectory in an Italian convent, and revealed the existence of a fresco painting which successive coats of whitewash had hidden for centuries. With infinite pains the whitewash was scaled off and a magnificent picture of one of the old masters stood in full view. The picture showed marvelous resemblance to the style of Raphael, and all Italy was excited by the dispute as to whether he or some other was the painter. Now, there were two classes of evidence: First, the external: the records of the convent, the life of Raphael, the painter's marks upon the picture; of these every one could judge. But there was, secondly, another kind of evidence—the internal—the tone and spirit of the painting, the style and expression of the whole—of this only those could judge who knew and loved the works of Raphael. There were hundreds and thousands utterly destitute of the fine artistic sense which alone could qualify them for judges; there were other hundreds and thousands who with all necessary natural susceptibility had never imbued themselves with Raphael's spirit enough to recognize his work when they saw it. The best judges and the only competent judges were found to be those who for years had sat before Raphael's pictures, striving lovingly to copy them. Every trait of the great painter's style had reproduced itself in their minds, and they could recognize his pictures at the first glance of the eye. Now, the truth of God can be recognized only in the same way. There is a heart knowledge which only a copying of the truth in our lives can ever give. This demand that we obey in order that we may know, is nothing more nor less than the declaration of a universal law of the human mind. The correctness of our judgment with regard to the nature and will of God depends on the diligence with which we have endeavored to imitate and obey him.

Let us make sure that we get the full meaning of the text. It does not say that a course of merely outward and formal obedience will enable us to understand God and his plans, still less does it say that without perfection of obedience there can be no knowledge of God. Our translation is perhaps responsible for some of these misapprehensions. In the original the word " will " is much stronger than it appears in our version. It really reads, " If any man *wills* to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." In other words, not only an outward obedience is needful; there must also be a right attitude of heart and will, in order to any correct knowledge of God and his truth. Do you suppose that Judas understood Christ? Could that covetous and grasping soul have any conception of that wondrous life of self-sacrifice that was unfolding before him? No; selfishness cannot comprehend unselfishness, falsehood cannot comprehend truth, impurity cannot comprehend purity. Nay, it denies the very existence of that which is its opposite, and declares that its own baseness must be in every other soul. Christianity is a mystery to the world. How many worldly people, in their secret hearts, doubt whether there is any reality underneath all this profession. As Cicero said once, " The eye sees only that which it brings with it the power of seeing." The Scripture says, "As a man thinketh, so is he." It is just as true that as a man is, so he thinketh. Before seeing must come being. A man cannot know God except by being like God and having his will set to do the will of God. Suppose a father has two sons: One is dutiful and obedient, the other perverse and ungrateful; one loves and confides in his father, the other longs to escape from his eye and control; one is watchful for every opportunity of humble and unnoticed service, the other proudly declares himself to be his own master. The father is a man of broad views and liberal heart, forming plans of enlarged benevolence, and using his wealth with wise foresight of others' needs. Tell me which of these sons will understand that father and comprehend his plans, the son whose whole spirit is that of narrow selfishness and disobedience, or the son whose soul is knit to the paternal heart by long-continued sympathy and service? Who does not see that the spirit of childlike obedience can alone enable us to enter into the mind and will of God?

And, on the other hand, how common it is to see men whose practical disobedience so warps the judgment as to neutralize all evidence brought to enlighten them, and lead them in spite of it to most perverse and reckless conclusions. Aristotle, heathen as he was, could say that the power of attaining moral truth is dependent on our acting rightly. It is just as true that acting wrongly blinds the soul to truth. Refusing to use the light given to us, we find that less and less light is given; like a neglected lamp, conscience burns dimmer and dimmer every day. What else can explain the monstrous blunders of Napoleon? Any man conversant with European history could have told him that to fuse heterogeneous nationalities into one and repeat in the eighteenth century the empires of Assyria or Rome was as foolish an attempt as to escape the attraction of the earth and leap to the planet Jupiter. Yet Napoleon's mighty intellect did not preserve him from dashing his head against that stone wall of nature's laws, and shattering it in the concussion. What else can explain the enormous folly of the naturalism of our day, finding in the animalculæ of every drop of stagnant water agencies for the consumption and removal of its decaying and unhealthful elements, agencies which exhibit proofs of design as marvelous as those displayed in the compensating balance of the great celestial mechanism above us, yet declaring in the next breath that blind force is the only ruler of the universe and that there is no God besides? Mere intellect will not keep men from stupendous error. An unsubmissive heart can blind the reason to a whole world of evidence. A wicked man may become most credulous of falsehood, until at last he can believe all the despicable slanders of Tom Paine or all the senseless mummeries of Rome, or all the vagaries of theosophy, while at the same time he treads under his feet as beneath contempt, the simple gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We have seen that only the obedient spirit is willing to learn the truth and that only the obedient spirit furnishes the proper medium of insight into truth.

Consider now, in the third place, that only the obedient spirit is capable of recognizing the truth in its essential nature as personal. For truth is not an abstraction, but a person. God is truth and truth is God. Why do two and two make four? Why are all the radii of a circle equal to each other? Why is virtue praiseworthy and vice condemnable? Simply because all these statements reflect and represent eternal facts in the being of God, and are themselves revelations of God. What we call separate truths are only partial manifestations of the God whose nature is truth and are no more to be comprehended in their isolation than a section of telegraph wire is to be comprehended aside from its relation to the circuit of which it forms a part and the pulsating electric force which makes it throb with life and intelligence. A piece of coal is a mere dead and insignificant thing until you regard it as a relic of carboniferous forests and as having a relation to the prehistoric sun that made those forests grow. And so any given truth in mathematics or in mind is falsely seen, until it is seen as related to God from whom it sprang. The scattered rays are comprehensible only when they are regarded as parts of one whole and as proceeding from one original and eternal sun of truth and righteousness.

And here we see the relation of truth to Christ. Christ is the truth in manifestation, even as God is the truth manifested. He is the way and the truth, as well as the life. He is the truth and the only truth, because he is the only revealer of God. In him and through him the whole physical and mental and spiritual universe consists, or holds together, even as he is the creative power through whom it was fashioned, and the end for which it was made. He is the light that lighteth every man, Jew or Gentile, heathen or Christian. Every ray that ever illuminated the world's darkness even before he came in the flesh proceeded from him, even though the light shined in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. And so to stand for Christ and obey Christ is to stand for the truth and obey the truth, and to deny Christ is to deny the truth.

Truth, then, is personal, and we cannot attain the truth without coming into proper relations to God who is the truth and to Christ in whom alone that truth is revealed. And what are these proper relations? They are the relations of the creature to the Creator; of the sinner to the Lawgiver whose law he has violated; of the believer to the Saviour who has died to redeem him. But here is required confession of weakness and sin; here are required humility and submission and faith. You cannot apprehend the personal truth from the proper point of view, you cannot rightly apprehend it at all, unless you come to it with the obedient spirit. To come to it in the spirit of arrogant and haughty self-sufficiency, as if you needed nothing and could work out all knowledge from within, is to render it impossible to attain the truth. You can know the truth only by becoming its servant; you can understand Christ only by following him; you can apprehend God only by submitting to God in his appointed way. Remember that truth is not an abstraction but a person; that you can know the truth only by knowing God, and that you can know God only by accepting and obeying the revelation of himself in Christ. The disciples said to Christ: "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." They longed for some demonstration of God's power; in their folly they thought that God was mainly power; while God is not power, but holiness and love. That holiness and love had been before their eyes for months and years. How sad and pitiful are Christ's words: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Even so it is. Christ is the truth of God, the holiness of God, the love of God, made known to men, brought down to our human comprehension and engaged in the work of our salvation, and only the obedient spirit can bring us into relations to this revealed truth of God such that we shall have the proper point of view for recognizing it in its essential nature. "I am the light of the world," says Christ. "He that followeth after me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me."

Only the obedient spirit is willing to learn the truth; furnishes the proper medium of insight into the truth; can recognize the truth in its essential nature as a person.

Notice now, finally, that *only the obedient spirit can secure for us as persons the teaching of this person who is the truth.* Only the personal Spirit of Christ, entering into the inmost depths of our personal spirits can give us the knowledge of the truth which we need. Truth is life and personality outside of us; it needs to become life and personality within us. Only the Holy Spirit can give us this inward teaching of the truth, and only the obedient spirit in us can secure the indwelling and illumination of the Holy Spirit of God. And this for two reasons: First, because there is much of the Spirit's teaching which in the nature of things cannot be given except to a receptive and submissive heart. Mineralogists tell us that there is a crystal called tourmaline that has the peculiar power of polarizing or twisting the rays of light that pass through it. Let a second crystal of tourmaline be added to the first in a transverse direction, and though each taken singly is transparent, every ray of light is stopped in the passage through the two, so that, in the words of a noted chemist, "the rays of the meridian sun cannot pass through a pair of crossed tourmalines"; the two crystals shut out the rays as perfectly as the closed slats of your window-blind shut out the sun. Turn the tourmalines in the same direction, and they are transparent to the light; cross them, and not a ray can pass through them. Now, the Spirit of God will shine into human souls as freely and bounteously as the sunlight, provided only we be open to receive him. "If our eye be single, our whole body shall be full of light." But conscience and will in us are like those tourmalines,—if both point in the same direction, God's light passes through and enters the soul, but let the will be set in a direction contrary to the pointing of conscience, and in a moment the light of God's Spirit is shut out. A heart opposed to the will of God and fully set in it to do evil is like those double and crossed tourmalines, no ray of gracious heavenly light penetrates it or diminishes in the least its natural darkness. Unless the direction of that will be changed there can be no revelation to it of God's love. Hardened as it is against love, it can see nothing in God but law and terror, and it needs no work of the Spirit to see that. There is a large proportion of God's truth which cannot in the very nature of things be revealed, except to the humble and obedient heart. But more than this: not merely the nature of things prevents the disobedient from being taught by the Holy Spirit, but there is a judicial forsaking of those that will not obey the truth. The Spirit, whose persevering and long-continued efforts to enlighten and save have only been despised and rejected, leaves the soul at last to its own devices. And this is what is meant when the apostle says that "for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they might believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." God in his righteous anger forsakes the soul that will not do his will, and thenceforth there is nothing before it but delusion and damnation. Thus "the secret of the Lord is with them only who fear him, and he will show them his covenant." "Be not, therefore, conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, in order that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Be sure, my friends, that no man ever yet put himself under the direction of the Spirit of God, without being led into all truth and duty, as the star led those wise men of old to the cradle of the Saviour and the humble worship of the Son of God.

A single illustration: Years ago there lived in an Eastern city a physician of eminence, whose practice among the sick and friendless had taught him much with regard to the misery of the world. He was constitutionally a doubter, and his doubts centered upon the person and divinity of Jesus Christ. He saw no other religion worthy of confidence than Christ's, but Christ's he could not accept. He could see the blessing of Christ's friendship and undertaking of one's burdens, but the possibility of it all he could not see. So he wandered on in the dark, without prayer and without peace, the spiritual opportunities and responsibilities of his profession burdening his conscience more and more, but his speculative difficulties growing thicker every moment. One day he met a minister of the gospel, in whom he had confidence, and with the first word began to pour forth his own heart. "I had the most painful struggle of my life this morning." "Ah, how so?" "I was attending upon a poor woman who has but a few hours to live, but her soul seemed in worse case than her body. It seemed to me that such a Saviour and friend as you believe Christ to be was just the Saviour and friend she needed; if I had only believed as you do, it would have been an unspeakable blessing to have knelt by her bedside and commended her to his mercy." "My friend," said the clergyman, "go at once and obey that impulse; whatever Christ may be, he is certainly as compassionate as he was when on earth and as able to help now as he was to heal the sick and hear the beggar's cry." The resolve was formed; the physician made his way once more to the sick-room; he knelt for the first time in prayer for another. He prayed Christ to teach her soul the way to God; but as he prayed Christ taught his soul the way to God also, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding streamed down into his heart. The one act of obedience had opened the way for Christ to enter, and with an inward experience of his power to forgive sins and renew the heart, he could doubt no longer as to his divinity, but bowed at his feet like Thomas, crying: " My Lord and my God!"

We all need a heavenly teacher, for we are all children groping in the dark. We must follow something. Shall it be our own reason or the opinions of men, or shall it be the lead of Jesus? I fancy that if he were here in visible form, the calm wisdom of heaven shining in his brow and the sympathy and compassion of a God beaming in his eye, not one of us would hesitate to put our hand in his and say, " O Saviour, be my teacher and my guide in these matters that so puzzle my reason and try my faith." But Christ is just as really here as if we could see him, and he is willing to accept the charge of our souls. He is the Light of the world. If we follow him we shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. Our wisdom is to obey him implicitly, expecting that what we know not now we shall know hereafter. The herdsman in the Alps, removing his family to the pastures above the glaciers, must sometimes, as he crosses the treacherous banks of snow, separate his children from him and forbid them to approach too near, lest their combined weight prove too great for the thin crust to sustain, and they be precipitated into fathomless abysses below. The little children wonder that father will not let them come near him. Most of all they wonder when he protects them from the fierce cold of a night upon the glacier by piling snow upon them and leaving them only the smallest aperture to breathe. Strange treatment; yet a father's love prompts it and it is the only way to save them. Is it not folly and madness for the children to refuse obedience because they cannot understand the reasons for the father's conduct? And is it anything but weakness and foolishness in us to withhold our obedience from God's plain commands, because forsooth we cannot understand the reason for them? Obey God, and we shall sooner or later know; disobey him, and we shall add to the misery of our ignorance the greater misery of self-destruction.

Some of you, my hearers, plead in extenuation of your disobedience the fact that there are things you cannot understand. But disobedience is not the effect of ignorance, but the cause. The law of nature is heart first, intellect afterward; submission first, knowledge afterward. You have made no progress in the solution of the mysteries by delaying to obey, and you never will make progress in knowledge of God's truth until you obey the truth. How will you ever get more light without using the light you have already? Ah, it is not knowledge you need, but those neglected duties of secret and family prayer, of public confession of the name of Christ, of inward consecration to the service of God—these are the things you need to perform. Not knowledge, but a heart set to do the will of God, is what is lacking.

Oh, that God would give you such a heart to-day—a heart humble, reverent, loving, obedient to God! With such a heart within you, you would learn in a single hour more of God's holiness, of your own sin, of Christ's mercy, of the Spirit's power, than you ever learned in all your life before. Obedience to God, that is the key and the only key to the mysteries of Christian doctrine and of Christian duty. Take that key, I pray you, and enter into true knowledge and eternal life!

XXXVIII

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS[1]

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (Matt. 1:1.)

There was once a time when the desert of Sahara was thought to be a most uninteresting subject to study. If we had been asked to describe it, we should have called it a vast flat region of drought and desolation, where scorching winds roll on mile after mile their blinding clouds of ever-moving sand, where every living thing dies for want of water and of food, and where the curse of the Almighty seems to rest forever. But modern investigation and explorations are changing all our old notions with regard to this. Barth and Rohlfs have shown that what was thought to be a level plain of sand is wonderfully diversified in surface. The great elevated plateau rises often into mountains three thousand to five thousand feet in height, breaking into huge cliffs and bounded by gigantic walls of rock. There are fields of naked rock where for a hundred miles not a grain of sand is to be seen, and again there are waste regions where marine shells of recent species, countless in number, show that at no remote geologic epoch, the plains formed the bed of the ocean, or where the whole surface is crusted over with salt, as if some old Dead Sea had once left its deposits there. There are magnificent islands of verdure, where, around cool springs of water the date palm flourishes, with acacias and ferns, and the exuberance of animal life is shown in birds of brilliant plumage, in the graceful form of the gazelle, and the strength and majesty of the lion. Yet there are wild fastnesses of the hills, where, on account of the elevation of the country, the inhabitants dress for a large part of the year in woolens. In places where the sands seem most hostile to human existence you may sometimes find, if you dig deep enough, that there are ruins of unknown cities buried beneath your feet, and evidences in abundance that there was once water enough to support them and is water enough now, if it were only drawn out from its hiding-places. And if you study the Sahara Desert long enough, you may come to the conclusion that by drying the great air-currents that sweep northward over the Alps, it may be, in spite of its apparent uselessness, doing most excellent service in protecting the whole of Europe from floods and inundations that would desolate its most fruitful lands.

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[1] A sermon preached before the Ministers' Institute, Granville, Ohio, July 1, 1870.

There are certain parts of Scripture which we have been accustomed to think of in like manner, as Sahara deserts of no possible interest or value. We often read them over with wonder that they should ever be permitted to encumber the book of God. Or, it may be, we omit them altogether, hopeless of ever comprehending them or getting good out of them. Now it is certain that the wonders of the Sahara Desert would never have been known without persevering and enterprising search. Those adventurous spirits who encountered unnumbered dangers in exploring it were inspired continually by the conviction that God could not have made a region three thousand miles in length by one thousand miles in breadth, and made it all in vain. They believed that, if they kept on in their search, they would find traces of his hand and evidences of his wisdom. If they had such confidence with regard to the book of nature shall we be less confident with regard to the seemingly waste regions of the book of revelation? Shall we not expect that every new investigation of its contents will teach us more of its author, even when the investigation is spent on parts that at first baffle our comprehension? Let me tell you a secret. The hidden meaning of Scripture sometimes refuses to reveal itself until we become perfectly familiar with the letter of it. Some poetry is obscure, because the meaning resides in the rhythm and proportion of the verse quite as much as in the bare words; the indefinable delicacy of the sense cannot be at all apprehended until the words become to our ears familiar as an oft-told tale; then, at some moment of half-despair at ever fully understanding our author, the subtle and shadowy thought dawns upon us and we recognize creative power and genius where we saw none before. So there are passages of Scripture which we may read ninety and nine times and have a very dim conception of their meaning. The reading is not on that account in vain; the hundredth effort is rewarded by a sudden flash of light that makes its inner significance and its connections with other Scripture perfectly plain and intensely satisfying; but without the familiarity which the ninety and nine apparently unsuccessful readings had given, we should not have been able to reap the benefit of the hundredth. So God has made spiritual food like earthly food to come to us only as the result of effort and persistent toil. We must eat our bread here too, in the sweat of our brow.

I wish to lead you to-day into one of these so-called deserts of Scripture, and after we get far away from anything known or of common interest, I wish to point out to you the gold that peeps out of the angles of the hard quartz rocks, the moisture and refreshing coolness that underlie the dry level of hot sand, the oases of greenness, the sublime architecture of the mountains, the presence, if we only notice it, of a living human interest even in these fancied scenes of desolation, and the far-reaching and inseparable connections of these despised regions of the Bible with others of which we think so much more highly. I take you into the very midst of that genealogy at the beginning of the New Testament in which we read that Abraham begat Isaac and Isaac begat Jacob and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren and Judas begat Pharez and Zara of Thamar and Pharez begat Ezrom and Ezrom begat Aram and Aram begat Aminadab, and so on for many verses more. "Is all this of any use to mankind?" you say. "Can this be a part of the book of inspiration? Can I ever hope to make it of practical benefit to me?" To all of which I answer: "I certainly think so. Let us see."

It is certain that, whether we think much of genealogies or not, many nations and ages have had a passionate fondness for them. The mingled curiosity and pride which lead an occasional individual in our own day to rummaging old records and conducting extensive correspondence in order to trace back the line of his ancestors to some ancient worthy who came over in the Mayflower is only a faint illustration of the far stronger family and genealogical instinct of the ancient world. The Homeric heroes called themselves, not by their own names, but by the names of such and such renowned warriors whose sons they were, and the earliest Greek histories seem to have been designed mainly to preserve the records of family and national descent. In the case of the Jews this tendency was heightened by several peculiar circumstances. "The promise of the land of Canaan to the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob successively, the exclusively hereditary priesthood of Aaron with its dignity and emoluments, the long succession of kings in the line of David, and the whole division and occupation of the land upon genealogical principles by tribes, families, and houses of fathers, gave a deeper importance to the science of genealogy among the Jews than in any other nation."

But the chief reason of all is one which I have not mentioned yet. This was that the whole Jewish nation was looking forward to the coming of a great deliverer, who should at once be prophet, priest, and king of Israel, who should deliver his oppressed people from all their foes and set up a kingdom which should fill the earth. This Monarch and Saviour was to come in the direct line of descent from certain of the ancient kings and worthies. Just as every family nearly related to the reigning houses of England or Austria or France preserves its family history with the utmost care, not only from pride in its glorious past, but from the constant possibility that some unknown contingency of the future may bring a son of its own upon the throne, so in a thousand Jewish families the records of descent were most anxiously treasured, in hope that from its stock might spring the promised King of Israel and Saviour of the world. A thousand mothers rejoiced in the prospect of offspring, and deemed barrenness an unutterable sorrow, because of their secret hope that out of the number of their children God might raise up one to sit on David's throne.

Only a few years ago the news came from England that a property valued at several millions of dollars had been left by a gentleman deceased, and that the only heirs were distant relatives in this country. The parties interested were notified to present their claims and the proofs of their being next of kin. There was a meeting of them, but alas, there were missing links in the line of evidence, and though there was strong probability of their being the real heirs, the neglect of some John or Peter Sykes in the last century had deprived them of the means of proving it. So a vigorous search was instituted. Every Sykes throughout the country was written to and questioned, till out of the dust and rubbish of some old chest in an out-of-the-way village among the coal mines of Pennsylvania a venerable Bible was exhumed, and there, in the pages between the Old and New Testaments was a family record that supplied all the missing links, away back to the original Sykes in whom the line of the present claimants and the line of the last owner of those millions were united. The musty record, kept with an English exactness and care,—for such exactness and care have not yet become common in young America,—renders certain the legal succession to the ownership of this vast fortune. Now there was a succession of infinitely greater value and dignity that needed to be proved eighteen hundred years ago in Palestine. A man arose who claimed to be the personage mentioned in the promise God had made to Abraham two thousand years before—the seed in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. He claimed also to be the heir of the kingdom and throne of David, the descendant of Abraham, and so to be the rightful inheritor of the promise confirmed to David a thousand years before. This claimant of honors so exalted was none other than Jesus, a carpenter's son, from Nazareth in Galilee. He did many wonderful works, he uttered words of surpassing wisdom, but instead of having or gaining an earthly crown or scepter, the Jews gave him the cross for his throne, and for his palace the sepulcher of Joseph. And yet his disciples after his death insisted still that he was the Messiah and King of Israel, that he had risen from the dead, and that he was now seated on an eternal throne in heaven. The first question that a Jew would ask would be about the ancestry of Jesus. All other proofs would be impertinent and worthless, until it could be proved that Jesus was actually in the direct line of succession from Abraham and David, the founders of the Jewish nation and kingdom. And so Matthew begins his Gospel with a family record, and the first words are, " The book of the generation," or genealogy, " of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." The first essential fact then, with regard to this curious list of descent, is that it is *the family record of Jesus* of Nazareth.

But did the Jews have family Bibles at all? Oh no! In those old days neither pocket Bibles nor family Bibles had yet been rendered possible. The copy of the law and the prophets on the manuscript rolls of the synagogue, from which the rabbi read every Sabbath Day, was the only ordinary source of knowledge of God's will; and yet, I suppose those old Hebrews were not so badly off, they carried so much more of God's word in their heads and hearts than many of us do. I sometimes almost wish that the written word could be taken from us for a while, that we might form the habit of pondering more deeply what we do hear, and committing it to our memories to be fixed there forever. It is certain that all Eastern nations make up in great degree for their lack of printed books by their wonderful facility of acquiring, and accuracy in retaining, the substance and form of oral instruction. This accounts in part, although the special agency of the Holy Spirit accounts also in part, for the extreme faithfulness with which the accounts of Christ's words and works were preserved during the few years before they were committed to writing in our present Gospels. By this marvelous power of memorizing and retaining, Jewish families kept in mind their own descent and recounted what were often " endless genealogies." But it is evident that these mental records were valid only to those who kept the memory of them; they could serve no great purpose as proofs in courts of law nor in the decision of conflicting claims to property. Security against fraud could only be obtained by public records, and private recollection was of value only as it agreed with these. And there is no end of evidences that the Jews provided for the keeping and transmission of such official and public records from generation to generation. Josephus, for example, after detailing his own ancestry, concludes by saying that he has "thus traced his descent as he has found it recorded in the public tables." In the archives of the temple at Jerusalem were national registers in which were kept accurate lists of David's and Solomon's descendants, while at the headquarters of each tribe, as at Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah, the records of that tribe were preserved. These tables were not necessarily mere records of natural descent, but were quite as much registers of inheritance, serving as title-deeds of the family possessions.

The second essential fact with regard to the genealogy of Jesus is this therefore—it is a genealogy *transcribed from public registers* and published to the contemporaries of Jesus as a legal document whose authenticity could be easily ascertained by comparison with the sources from which it was taken. This explains too, a singular feature of the record itself. If you notice the latter part of it, you will see that though Mary was the real parent of Jesus, and Joseph was not, still, the record does not profess to be the record of Mary's ancestry, but that of Joseph. The fact that it was transcribed from a public register shows why this must be so. Jesus was Joseph's adopted son and as such was entitled to succeed him in all his legal rights. In the public records Jesus could only appear *as* Joseph's son. It was a rule of the rabbis that descent on the father's side only shall be called a descent—the descent by the mother is not called any descent. As son of Mary he would have no royal rights, although there is sufficient evidence that Mary was a lineal descendant of David also. Only as son of Joseph was Jesus heir to the covenants made with David and Abraham.

A third fact I would have you notice is that this genealogy is not a record of natural descent, but is *a register of the royal succession.* I have said already that these tables were quite as often records of inheritance as lists of descent. And yet the ground idea of descent regulated the form of the record. Thus whoever succeeded to the inheritance, though he belonged to another branch of the family, was written down under the last owner as his "son," and this predecessor was also said to have "begotten" him. Now Matthew's Gospel was the Gospel of the kingdom; his aim is to present Christ to the Jews as the King of Israel and legal successor to David's throne. His genealogy therefore gives the *royal* pedigree, not the *natural* pedigree of Jesus. He inserts the name of Salathiel as the son of Jechonias, because Salathiel became heir to David's throne on the failure of Solomon's line in Jechonias, although the genealogy in Luke tells us that the real father of Salathiel was not Jechonias but Neri. And this suggests the real reason for the differences between the genealogy of Jesus with which Matthew begins his Gospel and the other genealogy of Jesus which we find in the third chapter of Luke. Luke gives the descent of Jesus *as a man,* through David's son Nathan. Matthew gives Jesus' descent from David *as a king,* through Solomon, the heir to David's throne. By intermarriage and adoption two such lines, the royal and the natural, might easily at one time coalesce and at another time diverge from each other, and this they appear to have done, first in Salathiel and afterward in Matthat or Matthan. So the lineal descent of Henry VIII from King John may be traced in two perfectly distinct lines, containing thirteen links in the one case and eleven in the other, and they do not touch each other at any intermediate point. On the other side the descent of James I from Henry VII, also traceable in two lines, conjoins five successions in each line, and the five successions touch at two points, namely, Mary Queen of Scots, and Margaret, daughter of Henry VII. Thus the descent of our Lord from Abraham by two lines which converge at one point and diverge at another is entirely consistent with known experience and therefore with historic credibility.

This genealogy then is a list of kings, or men of royal blood, a grander list than ever was inscribed on palace walls, because they were the royal ancestors of him who is King of kings and Lord of lords. Even the greatness of David and Solomon consisted mainly in this, that they were links in the chain that ended in the Messiah. This fact seems to be clearly in the mind of the evangelist as he transcribed the record. He prefixes to it the title " the book of the generation," not of Jesus, but "of Jesus Christ." Have you ever thought of the meaning of that word "Christ"? It is not a proper name so much as an official title. Jesus is the real name of our Lord, the name given him by his parents. But "Christ" like the word "Messiah" means "the anointed one." When Victoria was crowned queen of England there was a splendid assembly gathered in Westminster Abbey. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the highest ecclesiastic of the kingdom, acting as the representative of the established religion, poured upon the head of the young girl, who was so soon to assume the burdens of the scepter, a few drops of oil from a golden flask, and with this anointing offered solemn prayer. What was the meaning of this ceremony? It was a public recognition of the fact that the queen in the discharge of her great duties must be endowed with special grace from God. Oil is everywhere in Scripture the symbol of the Holy Spirit. When oil was poured upon the head of the queen at her coronation, it was the sign of the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit upon her to qualify her for her office. Just so in the Old Testament times, Samuel carried a horn of oil to Bethlehem and there anointed David to be king over Israel. And not only kings, but prophets and priests were in like manner anointed before they entered upon their work, in token of their entire dependence upon God for his grace and the abundant communication of God's Spirit to them, to fit them to speak in his name and to serve him in his sanctuary. When the coming of the Saviour was predicted, therefore, it was said that God would put his Spirit upon him. He was called the Messiah, or the

Christ, or the Anointed One, because he was to hold all these offices of prophet, priest, and king, and because, in order to qualify him for them, God should give his Spirit without measure unto him. Observe now how Matthew, who presents Jesus as the Saviour promised in Old Testament Scripture, begins his Gospel with the words "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ"—joining the human name of Jesus with the official title of the promised Saviour, a conjunction never attempted in the lifetime of Jesus. What does he mean but this, that Jesus of the seed of David, though he is descended from all these human ancestors, is notwithstanding much more than a human Saviour; he is nothing less than the Messiah on whom the fulness of God's Spirit was to rest, the promised prophet, priest, and king of Israel, the completion of the Old Testament Economy, the personage in whom all God's historic purposes are consummated and fulfilled. Thus the first page of the New Testament proclaims on its very front that the new dispensation is no sudden afterthought of God, but is the goal and fulfilment toward which the whole history of the race has been tending. The genealogy of Jesus, in other words, points out *the connection of the New Testament with the Old.*

Let me recapitulate now the four essential characteristics of this genealogy. First, it is a family record. Secondly, it is a record transcribed from public registers. Thirdly, it is a record of the royal succession. Fourthly, it is the ancestral record of One to whom these ancient generations point, and in whom the old dispensation finds its fulfilment and its end. But there are practical lessons to be drawn from this long list of names, which will take it out from the rank of matters interesting only to a curious mind and will put it side by side with other scriptures that touch and move our hearts.

We see in the barren record the proof of *God's faithfulness.* Many a long year had passed since Abraham had received the promise that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. He kept on waiting and watching while he lived, but death darkened his eyes twenty centuries before the promise was fulfilled. Now and then through those twenty centuries, some time of unusual prosperity gave hope to God's people that the day of the promised blessing was near at hand; but then sin had broken in like a flood, and the times of prosperity were followed by the severest judgments and the deepest humiliations. The whole nation at length was carried away captive to Babylon. The kingdom was destroyed, the heirs to the throne were consigned to private life; when Jesus came, not a single one of the royal line had sat upon a throne for six hundred years. The lineal descendants of King David became poorer and obscurer, indeed, as they approached Christ; Joseph, of the house of David, is a poor carpenter of Nazareth, and Mary, his wife, is so pressed with poverty that she must bring forth her first-born son in a stable and lay him in a manger, and afterward offer for her cleansing not the lamb that served for the sacrifice of the rich, but the two turtle-doves that were accepted as the offering of the poor. It might have seemed to human eyes that God had utterly forgotten his promise and that none could ever rise from David's posterity to sit upon his throne. But look at the genealogy. The list that begins with Abraham and the kings of Israel, but dwindles down at length into successors so obscure that we know nothing of them but their names, suddenly bursts out into the name of Jesus Christ, King of Israel and Saviour of the world. Out of the fallen trunk of David's house there springs a new branch, and in Jesus all the promises to David and to Abraham are fulfilled. Let the impatient and unbelieving heart, that frets and despairs because prayer is not yet answered, and God delays his coming, and wickedness seems to prevail and the promise seems to slumber, let that heart remember that " one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day," that " man's extremity is God's opportunity," and that though our faith fail, yet " God abideth faithful," and will surely show his faithfulness at last by fulfilling to each of us every true desire and petition of our hearts, and to his church, that glorious promise that " the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Observe too, in this genealogy, the evidences of *God's power.* It is a noticeable fact that while the list embraces many patriarchs and heroes of the faith, it contains also the names of wicked kings, like Ahaz and Manasseh, one of whom reached the climax of depravity and idolatry by burning his own son in dreadful sacrifice to heathen gods, and the other of whom set up graven images in the very house of God and seduced the whole nation into sin. Not simply in the line of heirship to the throne, but among the natural ancestors of Jesus, from whom his human blood descended, we have the names of women to which the blackest stains of sin attached. Not only do we read, "Boaz begat Obed of Ruth," a Gentile by birth, but also, "Judas begat Pharez and Zara of Thamar," "Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab" and "David begat Solomon the king of her that had been the wife of Uriah." Here are Tamar and Rahab, who played the harlot, and Bathsheba, the partner of David's sin, among the list of ancestors of Jesus. This list needed only to express the names of his *male* ancestors, in order to make it complete and correct. Why is it that these specimens of human depravity are dragged from their hiding-places in the long-forgotten past and made to take their place among the lineal ancestors of Jesus? Was it not for this that the glory of the line should not seem to be the line itself but the great personage in whom it ends? Was it not to show that Jesus owed nothing of his sublime elevation above common humanity to his mere natural birth? A royal and sacred pedigree did not confer personal holiness or prevent even Abraham's descendants from becoming fearfully corrupt. Look at this genealogy with the marks of human wickedness scored all along its course, and then tell me if it did not require the new-creating power of God and the fulness of the Holy Ghost to bring from this tainted human nature one who was "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners!" See the names that figure there, Thamar, Rahab, Bathsheba, Ahaz, Manasseh, and then, last of all, the name of

" Jesus who is called Christ," and adore the wonders of that divine power that can bring a " clean thing out of an unclean."

Notice too, the evidences of *God's order* here. " So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations." Thus reads the text—and if you count them up you will see that the generations from Abraham to Christ are distributed into three portions of fourteen each, thus dividing them into the generations *before, during,* and *after* the sitting of David's family upon the throne. " It was common among the Jews to distribute genealogies into divisions containing some mystical number, and to do this some generations were repeated or left out." Matthew accordingly omits after Joram (in the eighth verse) the names of Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah who succeeded him, and there are doubtless some omissions likewise in the third division. A modern pedigree thus broken would be defective, but it was not so with the genealogies of the Hebrews. With them other considerations were more important than the mere *completeness* of the record, so long as accuracy was preserved as far as the record went. And accordingly in Old Testament genealogies, as in classical usage, we find not seldom that a man is called the son of a remote ancestor, though not far off we may have given us the fullest means of completing the record. Some suppose these divisions of the genealogy to have been arranged for the sake of aiding the memory; others, that it is an example of the Jewish habit of mind, which delighted in correspondences. Both may be true, yet I think another and a higher reason prevailed over these and decided the choice of the method. To the mind of the evangelist this long genealogy was no barren list of names; every part of it rather was instinct to him with life. Not only did every name suggest to him some feature of God's dealings with his people, but they all arranged themselves in order and harmony among themselves. Taking the history of the Jews *before, during,* and *after* the sitting of David's family upon the throne as the basis of the arrangement, he set them all in separate portions of fourteen each, to express in this way the sense he had of the measured periods of the divine plans. Each of these three epochs of their national history, he would intimate to his countrymen, had been meted out in omniscient wisdom and all these early generations had been set in order as steps of preparation for the coming of Christ. From the very beginning of their existence as a nation there had been a symmetrical divine plan which had been unfolding in perfect order and beauty from age to age, and which now had revealed its full grandeur and glory in the coming and work of Christ. O you who are perplexed and bewildered by the mysteries of God's dealings in after history or in the history of your own life, who wonder sometimes whether this driving hither and thither, this falling and rising again, this gaining and losing, this apparently senseless and objectless whirl has in it any guiding hand, any beneficent order, look at this genealogy, think of the generations that came and went, wondering for what they were made; think of the holy souls that rose and struggled and died, groping their way all the while as in a labyrinth to which they had no clue, and see how after all is past and the history is complete, inspiration can arrange them all in their places as parts of a symmetrical and regular design, from which no part could be lacking without endangering the whole! Our lives are like bits of stone which the artist grinds and fashions for a work of mosaic; taken by themselves they have but little beauty and the shape of them is very puzzling to the observer; but when put in their places among ten thousand others and polished like a mirror they form a part, and an essential part, of a picture whose skill is matchless and whose beauty is beyond all praise. This genealogy of Jesus not only shows us the divine order with which the all-wise God has wrought out his historic plan of the ages before Christ, but it assures us also that when eternity shall see God's work complete, the like order and beauty shall appear in the providential arrangements that now most try our faith and fill our hearts with sorrow.

Last of all, we see in this genealogy *God's testimony*—his testimony to the greatness of Jesus Christ, his Son. While there are many genealogies in the Old Testament, in the New there is but one, and that is the genealogy of Jesus. The old principle of race and family and heritage, providentially arranged to point the world forward to Christ, has lost its importance since Jesus came; in him all Old Testament genealogies find their end, beyond him it is impossible to go. And what a genealogy this single one of the New Testament is! How narrow and brief and mean compared with this are the lists of modern times! The reigning houses of Europe can none of them trace back their lineage for more than a thousand years, and we call it an old family that can tell who its ancestors were even three hundred years ago. But Matthew traces back the lineage of Jesus two thousand years to Abraham, and Luke does not stop till he carries it step by step to Adam, the father of the race. There never has been and there never can be again another such record in the world. The Jews have no such genealogies now. Even if their belief were true that Messiah is yet to come, and he were to appear to-day, they have no means of identifying him. This genealogy was preserved until the heir of David's throne and Abraham's blessing actually came, and then all the national registers of the Jews were swept away in the destruction of Jerusalem. The genealogy is like a divine finger pointing to Christ as a unique personage, the end of the old and the beginning of the new dispensation, true King of the spiritual Israel and the only Source of blessing and salvation for the race. How clearly does it show that "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Like the voice heard at the Mount of Transfiguration when Moses and Elias, the representatives of the Law and the Prophets, were enshrouded in the cloud and rapt from the apostles' sight, so God's voice seems at the very beginning of the gospel to sound out in this genealogy, saying to us: "The old is past forever, the day has dawned, let the shadows flee away, this is my beloved Son, hear ye him." Yes, the genealogy has a voice for every one of us, whether we be children of God or not. It is God's testimony to all that Jesus Christ is the grand personage, for whose coming all the ages of the past have been only steps of preparation, and in whom are embodied all the hopes of the world. Aye, it is God's testimony to you, O sinner, that Jesus is the one and only Saviour, and that there is " no other name given under heaven among men whereby you can be saved." What folly to think that you can lay any other foundation for your peace with God and your hope of heaven than this one foundation which God has laid in Jesus Christ! Through all these ages the unfolding of this great plan and development of this redemption has occupied the mind of God. Can it be? Can it be that what had been so near God's heart for ages should have no interest for you? Does not this testimony of God demand your immediate and implicit trust? Can you safely refuse submission to this kingdom which is from " everlasting to everlasting " ? With this record of God before you, I pray you at once to take Jesus Christ for your Saviour and your King. How will you escape, oh, how will you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?

XXXIX

CONFESSING CHRIST[1]

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 10:32, 33.)

In the parallel passage in Luke we read: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." There is a similar passage in the same evangelist which marks more definitely the time at which this public denial shall take place: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's and of the holy angels." Comparing these passages with the text I think we cannot doubt that Jesus is pointing forward to the judgment of the last day. It is plain too, that he declares himself in these passages to be the arbiter of human destinies, the only advocate whose intercession will then avail. When the world shall be gathered before its Judge, his single word shall turn the scale of life and death. But there shall be nothing inequitable in his decisions. The treatment each human soul receives from Christ in that great day of account and doom shall exactly correspond with the treatment Christ has received from him here. Whosoever has confessed Christ before men, him Christ will confess; whosoever has denied Christ, Christ will deny.

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[1] A sermon preached in the First Baptist Church, Oswego, N. Y., February 4, 1900.

We naturally ask, first, what the Saviour means by confessing him. What has been said already prepares us to answer that it cannot mean mere confession with the lips, although confession with the lips is included in it. The Apostle Paul expressed the exact truth when he said: " If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." In other words, confession is necessary, but only such confession as proceeds from true faith in the heart. Observe the wisdom of the divine requirements, and the knowledge it indicates of human nature. On the one hand, the outward life is not undervalued; it has its full rights accorded to it. Every man is required to consecrate this to Christ by openly avowing him as his Master and Saviour. But then, this is not all; the inward confession and allegiance of the heart, the firm, consistent, lifelong siding with Jesus, the merging of our own interests in his interests and those of his kingdom, these are things that are of greatest importance, and without these all confessions of the lips, or submission to outward ordinances, are worthless. To confess Christ then, is nothing less than to connect one's self indissolubly with Christ and stand for him in life and death. And so, on the other hand, to deny Christ is not simply to deny him with the lips. We may deny him outwardly in the family, in business, in society. But all these outward methods may be only symptomatic of a great inward denial—a denial of the heart. As our whole life may be a confession, so too our whole life may be a denial, of our Lord.

But just here arises a second question: What is the relation between the confession of the heart and the confession of the lips? I answer it is partly *a relation of cause and effect.* The outward confession is the necessary and inseparable consequence of the inward submission and allegiance of the soul to Christ. When the fire of love is kindled within, it cannot help shining out and witnessing to the dear name of Jesus. A denying heart will find an obstacle to confession in every circumstance of life, and simply because there is nothing in it to confess; it knows nothing of the grace and power of Christ. A confessing heart, on the other hand, is conscious of an irresistible movement toward outward acknowledgment of mercies received; the word of the Lord is as fire shut up in the bones. Like Peter and John, it cannot but speak the things it has seen and heard. In one of the dungeons of the Tower of London, where the confessors of the true faith were imprisoned in the time of bloody Mary, I saw an inscription cut with penknife into the stone wall: "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved. Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life"; and underneath was signed the name, "T. Fane." Even in the cell, before execution, the friends of Christ would write out his words for a testimony to those who should come after them, and set to their seal that he was true. I thought how many in the history of Christ's religion have confessed their

Lord at the loss of all things earthly, from the time when Stephen, the first martyr, witnessed for his Redeemer, "though cursed and scorned and bruised with stones," down to the last heathen girl who is disowned by her family and turned out of house and home because she loves the Saviour. The true faith of Christ is a faith that overcomes the world, and that cannot be true faith in Christ which does not confess its Saviour.

The relation between the confession of the lips and the confession of the heart is partly too, a relation of *means and end.* The outward confession is ordained as a means of strengthening the inward attachment of the soul to Christ. There is an assurance and confidence which can never in the nature of things be ours until we confess Christ openly before men. The trembling faith becomes decided and strong by making it known to others. And for this reason the outward confession of Christ's name ought not to be postponed till we have reached some ideal standard of Christian experience. Christian experience can be perfected only by confession; to delay confessing Christ with the hope of being better prepared is only to lose what confidence we have. He who knows Christ not only *will* confess him, but he *must* confess him, if he would hope to grow in his attachment and love for Christ. See, then, the profound philosophy of Christ's appointments. He has given us the church and its ordinances, not simply for his own sake, but for our sake, as a means of expressing and developing the life of God in our souls. The public profession of allegiance to him, the communion of saints, the telling to others of our own experiences of his gracious dealings are necessary helps to piety and methods of perfecting holiness. And then the work we are set to do in the world, the inviting of our friends and neighbors to Christ, the testimony we give to the unconverted of the worth and comfort of religion, the witness we bear to Jesus' power to forgive sins and save the soul, all these are Christ's ways of bringing us into closer union with himself and of making vivid and clear our consciousness of his presence and his love.

But there are very few who do not feel at times a shrinking from this duty of confessing Christ. We doubt at such times whether we have any gifts for this work. And this leads me to a third question: On what does the duty of confessing Christ rest? I answer not on any ability or happy faculty we possess, but on what Christ has done for us. We are not to look at ourselves. We are to *expect* resistance there to every good impulse. Just so long as there is sin remaining in us, our obedience will be fettered and hindered. What ought to be as natural and spontaneous as the flowing of a stream from the fountain will be viewed as duty. The very word that Christ uses implies that he expects us to meet this opposition and to overcome it. For confession is something more than profession. It is profession in the face of difficulty. The very test of our having the life of Christ in us is the fact that in spite of the opposition of the world and in our own hearts we do confess our Redeemer. And this duty of confession belongs to all, because Christ has given himself for all. When Peter the Great had determined to make Russia a naval power in Europe, he went into the shipyards of Holland and worked with his own hands that he might learn to teach his countrymen; and that humbling of himself to manual toil for the sake of Russia is celebrated by monument and song throughout the empire. What monument shall we rear in our hearts and lives to him who, being rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich? Is confession of his name as our Lord and Master and the consecration of heart and life to his service any too great a return for the deliverance he has wrought for us at the cost of his humiliation and death upon the cross?

And is there no guilt and dishonor in *refusing* thus to acknowledge him? There was once a mother who left her infant daughter sleeping in the cradle while she went a little distance upon an errand. During her absence the house caught fire and the stairway was wrapped in flames. The mother's first cry was for her child, but none had seen it or thought of it, and, in spite of all remonstrances, she went for it through the flames. The child was saved unharmed, but the mother was so burned that life hung for a long time trembling in the balance. When she recovered, her friends could not recognize her; her face and hands were so awfully disfigured that none cared to look upon her twice. But the daughter grew up to beautiful womanhood. One day a stranger entered the dwelling and paid his court to the daughter. This man caught a glimpse of the mother as she passed through the room, and, shocked at her terrible appearance, asked the daughter who that was. And the girl was ashamed to tell, and made up some lying story to the effect that she was no relative of hers. She who owed not only her beauty, but her life, to a mother's self-devotion and self-immolation, refused to acknowledge that she had any connection with her. Was there any measuring the wickedness of that pride or the hardness of that ungrateful heart? But there is one who has done more than that for you and me—one who suffered agony and death for us. "His visage is marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of men." Oh, how great is our shame and guilt when we refuse to acknowledge him as our brother, our Saviour, our Lord!

We believe the extension of his kingdom in the earth to be the true remedy of the world's ills and the true prescription for human happiness. But how shall his kingdom be extended except by the confession of its value and power on the part of us who believe in these? Christ's method of conquering the world to himself is by this confession of his name. Without such confession, we not only can do nothing to advance his cause, but our influence is necessarily on the side of his adversaries. The world classes as its own every man who does not explicitly declare himself for Christ. The example of those who confess Christ is an all-important means of bringing others to confess him. Who that has read it will ever forget that scene in "Tom Brown at Rugby" where young Arthur, the delicate and timid boy, the first night of his arrival at the great school, dares nobly to do what none had had courage to do before, kneel down by his bedside before retiring, in the presence of all the boys, and say the prayers his mother had taught him. Some of the boys laugh, some sneer, and one young bully flings a boot at him as he kneels, but still the boy prays on. Oh, what power that example has! A score of boys lie tossing on their beds that night in shame and conviction of their own cowardice. A score of resolutions are made that they will themselves do right in future, and the next morning sees Tom Brown kneeling too, and day by day others are added to the number, till evening and morning prayer becomes the rule and not the exception in that great dormitory room. It is only a picture of what happens everywhere in life. One man who has the bravery and the grace to follow his convictions and openly to confess his Saviour, awakens by this very act the consciences of a score of others, and they are led to put away their fears and stand for Jesus. So on the other hand, our silence, our timidity, our denials of our Lord are made the text and excuse for others' sins. Many in all probability now side against Christ, who if we were only faithful might be living witnesses for the Redeemer.

A fourth question is this: What necessary connection is there between our confession or denial of Christ and Christ's confession or denial of us? We may be sure there is some necessary connection. Christ does not deny those who deny him, on the principle of revenge, as if he could say that one ill turn deserves another. He does not confess those who confess him, on the principle of personal and selfish favoritism. No, those whom he confesses or denies he cannot in the nature of things treat otherwise. Do not forget that this confession or denial on our part is the confession or denial of the heart, and not merely of the lips, and manifests the inmost character and being of the soul. He who in his soul confesses Christ must have sympathy with Christ and a spirit of submission to his will. Faith and love and holiness, in germ at least, exist in his heart. And so he who denies Christ by refusing to him his worship and allegiance, reveals thereby an alienation of heart from Christ, a lack of all sympathy with him or love for him. The confession or denial of the lips shall be brought into judgment only as evidence that the inward being was on the one hand bound to Christ in obedience and love, or on the other, was destitute of his saving grace and his life-giving spirit.

And who is it we deny when we deny Christ? Ah, it is God himself, our Creator, our Preserver, our Lawgiver, our Judge. When we consider that Christ is the only God of whom we know anything at all. that he is Deity revealed, God manifested, Divinity brought down to our human comprehension and engaged in the work of our salvation, that all the fulness of the Godhead is in him, and that besides him there is no Saviour, then we see that to confess Christ is to give in our allegiance to God, and that to deny Christ is to turn our backs on God. I recollect how a swaggering, blaspheming, half-drunken officer, during the war, insulted and almost drove from the dock at Alexandria, a quiet inoffensive person in citizen's dress, and how that same officer turned pale, fell upon his knees and begged for mercy, when the quiet citizen demanded his sword, put him under arrest, and made himself known as General Grant. We may think it a little thing to deny Christ now, and to treat his commands with indifference, but it will be a more solemn thing when we wake in eternity and find that he whom we have denied is none other than the living God, before whose judgment-throne we are to give account for the deeds done in the body.

And there is another thing still to be considered, namely, that this confessing of those who confess him and denying those who deny him, instead of showing him to be changeful and dependent on circumstances, is the very proof of his immutability. Whoever yet blamed the sun for partiality or inconstancy, because it melts wax but hardens clay? The great luminary shines on in unchanging majesty; different objects are differently affected by it only because of the difference in their natures. So the very fact that Christ's holiness is unchanging makes it impossible for him to do otherwise than confess those who confess him and deny those who deny him. In all this he is only unfolding the inevitable law of the divine nature, that attracts the good and repels the bad. In his denials there is no personal pique or anger, but only the revelation of the essential unlikeness between himself and sinners. He has given himself for them; they will not give themselves for him; the spirit of self-sacrifice which possesses him is not in them; they live for self, not for God; and this selfish spirit is not the spirit of heaven, but the spirit of hell; they only go to their own place when Christ separates them from him. Thus the same being who appears as a God of love to the righteous appears to the wicked as a consuming fire. There is no arbitrariness, but rather divine immutability, in the declarations: "I love them that love me"; "if we deny him, he also will deny us"; "with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward"; for all these are only emphatic declarations that God's dealings with men shall exactly correspond with their character and conduct.

I am glad it is not my province to judge any of those before me. Let me remind you however that Christ's eye sees and his righteousness will judge you, in exact accordance with your treatment of him and your disposition toward him. When I think that each of you must shortly stand before that crowned and glorified Saviour, to be either confessed or denied by him, I am impelled to plead with you to make sure that you confess him here not only with the lips but in heart and life. Oh, reflect what it will be to be denied by the only Saviour, the only Friend of sinners, from whose denial there can be no appeal, because in him as in an infinite reservoir is treasured up the whole vast compass of God's redeeming grace and compassion. God has come in Jesus Christ and has manifested himself as the Lamb of love and sacrifice. What hope will there be when the mercy of the Lamb shall be exchanged for the wrath of the Lamb; when all the grace and compassion of the Godhead shall be turned to justice and indignation against those who have rejected and despised him? Better lose all happiness in this world, better undergo all labors, and endure all sufferings, than to hear Christ say to us at last: "I know you not!" and with that denial to be shut out from God's protection and favor forever, and from all the blessings and joys of the kingdom of heaven!

But on the other hand, what safety, what honor, what endless joy await those who have witnessed a good confession and have stood for Jesus in spite of all the contradictions of the world! Were those Union prisoners sorry they had suffered so much at Andersonville, when they landed at Fortress Monroe under the old flag once more, and President Lincoln thanked them in the name of the republic? And will it not be worth all the cost, and all the suffering of a Christian life, to have Christ come down from his throne at the last great day to welcome us and confess us as his redeemed and faithful ones before his Father and the holy angels? Oh, that we all might sing in heart and life that stirring and exultant hymn:

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
  Or to defend his cause;
Maintain the honor of his name,
  The glory of his cross.

Jesus, my God, I know his name;
  His name is all my trust;
Nor will he put my soul to shame,
  Nor let my hope be lost.

XL

THE TEARS OF JESUS[1]

Jesus wept. (John 11:35.)

THIS is the shortest verse in the whole Bible. It is a fact of no great importance in itself, for the division into verses was made by uninspired and frequently injudicious men centuries after the sacred text was first written. Yet it is a fact of interest to us, because it shows us how impressive and affecting these men of other times felt the words to be. In this single instance they did what they never did again,—set two little words in a verse by themselves, as if to intimate that they were unusually solemn and full of meaning. Even a slight meditation upon them will convince us, I think, that these old students of the Scriptures were right, and that here we have a unique statement of the Gospels, through which we catch glimpses of the most characteristic features of our Saviour's nature and work.

Let us notice two things which make it remarkable that Jesus wept. The first is that his tears were not the tears of one who was always weeping, but the tears of the most manly and majestic soul that ever lived. I have heard people say that Jesus never smiled. I wonder where such persons have got their knowledge; it certainly cannot be from the Scriptures. The evangelists represent our Lord as possessing a complete manhood and as exercising all the emotions proper to manhood. No curtailed and narrow life was his.

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[1] A sermon preached in the Calvary Baptist Church, New York City, July 16, 1882.

In the days of his childhood, the gospel narrative presents him to us as indistinguishable from other children; we naturally think of innocent prattle and childish laughter as well as of childhood's sorrows and tears. And during his ministry, there were times when he rejoiced in spirit, and when that rejoicing must have shone out from eye and lip and brow. Was there no smile upon his face when the weary and heavy laden accepted his invitation and threw themselves down at his feet? None of that frivolity of mind which descends to trifles and turns life itself into a continual jest, nothing of this was there. But we may be sure that there was a calm in Jesus' face which was not often broken by bursts of weeping. Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief as he was, the strong crying and tears were mostly reserved for hours of secrecy, when none but the eye of his Father and a few trusty disciples was on him. His tears are no commonplace outbreaking of ill-regulated sensibility. All the more remarkable is it then, that this once, in presence of a great crowd of spectators, it is related that "Jesus wept."

There is a second thing that renders these tears remarkable. It is this: They were shed by one who had no griefs of his own over which to weep, and who was just about to remove the immediate cause of the grief he saw about him. As they were not the tears of unmanliness so they were not the tears of despair. You remember the scene, and the resurrection from the tomb which followed this weeping. And yet the same voice that cried: "Lazarus, come forth!" was, just before, heard uttering the common expressions of human sorrow. The tears were the tears of one who was about to raise the dead. How different they were from the tears which Martha and Mary shed! Martha and Mary wept at the thought of the goodness and truth, and brother's love, which they should never see again on earth. They wept bitterly and inconsolably. But not so Jesus. He had already spoken of Lazarus' death as only a sleep from which divine power would speedily awaken him. He had come to the sepulcher with the distinct purpose of speaking a word of might which would bring back the soul from the abode of spirits. Even while he stood there, the thought must have rejoiced him that he would turn this mourning into gladness and this sorrow into speedy joy. And yet the great Being who was to do all this—he who carried in his girdle the keys of death and hell—stood there amid the tearful crowd, and as men looked upon him, they saw that he too was in tears. "Jesus wept."

Thus we have considered two things which made these tears of Jesus remarkable, namely, the manly calmness of his nature and his power and purpose to remove the immediate cause of the sisters' sorrow. These considerations throw a mystery over these tears of Jesus. What was the cause of these tears? If they were not the overflowings of mere excited sensibility, nor the mournful proof of a despairing heart, what manner of tears were they? There are two answers which we may give, and the first is that *they were tears of sympathy with the grief of those he loved.* Here were two friends of Jesus, whose kindness and affection had made their home a refuge for him. It was an intimacy dating back in all probability to the first months of his Judean ministry, when his adherents were few and when the authorities of Jerusalem had treated his claims with contempt. All the more must Jesus have been attached to this noble family of Bethany, who so early espoused his cause and saw in him the Messiah and King of Israel. Not many homes were open to him; the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of man too often had not where to lay his head. Not many families could have furnished our Lord with a congenial abode. This family seems to have been distinguished by a wonderful strength of affection, knitting each member to each with a love which many waters could not quench, nor death itself destroy. And this mutual love drew forth the love of Jesus; of no other family are such words as these written: " Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." Blessed with abundance of worldly goods as well as with these better treasures of the heart, all things had gone well with them. But now came the first terrible stroke of sorrow that had ever lighted upon them, and their hearts were crushed with a weight of anguish exactly proportioned to the greatness of their love. Now they were gaining their first bitter experience of the fact that " Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure, thrill the deepest notes of woe."

How much there was here to touch the heart of Jesus! These best of his friends were in sore distress. And he, in part, had caused their sorrow. Evermore in their grief, would come up the reproachful exclamation: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, our brother had not died." The consciousness that always adds poignancy to sorrow, the consciousness that there was a way in which it might have been prevented, was made more bitter still by the doubt of Jesus' interest in their case. There was a mystery about it that confounded them. Was Jesus their best friend? How then *could* it be that he should know their need, yet never come to save their only brother from the grasp of death? And with this there was very probably the feeling that they were forsaken of God also. Confidence in God is often shaken by the desertion of those we love. If Jesus could forsake them in their hour of need, how natural it was that they should begin to despair, even of the superintending care and goodness, aye, of the very presence and being, of God! If there is anything dreadful on earth, it is the "horror of great darkness," when not only the light of earthly love goes out in death, but when the light of God's love goes out also. Affliction without hope, sorrow without God, that is "the land of darkness and the shadow of death, where the very light is as darkness."

And yet, while Martha and Mary were tempted to fancy themselves alone in the bitterness of their grief and deserted by their best friend, Jesus was not only near them, but he entered into all their trial, and felt every pang of it as if it were his own. They did not know, they could not understand how fully; still it was true that Jesus sorrowed for them more than they sorrowed for themselves. For all souls feel keenly and deeply just in proportion to their capacity for feeling. I have seen a child suffer bodily pain; but I have seen the mother of that child stand over the bedside of the little one, with an anguish on her face of which the child was utterly incapable, and which the child could not possibly comprehend. If the mother could have taken the child's physical suffering on herself, she would have thought it great gain. And so the mental tension and grief of a large and sympathizing heart may be very much greater than the original grief with which it sympathizes, simply because the heart is larger. It was so with Jesus. His was the tender and illimitable nature that took in to itself, as it were, all the trial and sickness and pain that it saw about it, felt it with a keenness that we can never understand, because we cannot understand the infinite breadth and sensibility of his being. Matthew tells us that his mingling with the infirm and possessed, and his healing of them, were a fulfilment of those words of the prophet Isaiah: "Himself *took* our infirmities and *bore* our sicknesses." It was this identification of himself with those he loved, this putting of himself under the whole burden of their grief and misery, this penetrating of all the greatness of his nature with their sorrow, that was shown when Jesus wept, amid that weeping crowd at the tomb of Lazarus.

It has sometimes been said that we have here one of the great proofs that Jesus was a man like ourselves, possessed of true human nature that can sympathize with us now, even though he has ascended into the heavens. I acknowledge that this is so, and rejoice in it. This weeping of the Saviour assures us that he has a brother's heart, a heart that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. But if this were all, the revelation would not be so great after all. That there was once a man who had perfect sympathy with human griefs, that is beautiful enough; but what is that to me, if this man is no longer on the earth? It is not then the fact of Christ's human nature that makes this scene so valuable to us, but rather the fact that this human nature and these human tears were media through which the divine nature and the divine affections were made manifest to us. For Jesus was God as well as man, and through his human life the attributes of God were brought down to our comprehension and demonstrated to us. How often have men questioned whether God were not too great to be affected with sympathy or love or sorrow! How often have men thought that they honored him by denying that there was anything in him that corresponded to the feelings of our human hearts! Even though the Scriptures declare that man is made in the image of God, and that God's mind is the prototype of man's, there have been religious teachers who have represented the Deity to be impassive and cold and far away as the iceberg of an arctic night! Now God was manifest in the flesh to teach us better things than this—to teach us that God is love, that just in proportion to the height and glory of his nature is the tenderness of his sympathy and compassion. And so

Jesus' tears speak a silent language more powerful than words; they tell us of the infinite emotions of God's heart toward those who suffer; they assure us that "in all our affliction he is afflicted" too. Oh, the blessing of knowing this! Sorrow, without God's presence and love, is rayless and inconsolable. But sorrow, with a present God and Saviour, is mingled with a heavenly peace. We know that "he doeth all things well," and though the sun's face is hidden by a cloud of trouble, there is a bright light upon its dark expanse that proves to us that "behind the cloud is the sun still shining."

I know there are many difficulties attending this conception of God's sympathy, and I do not pretend to solve them all. But I cling close to the representations of Scripture. There I find no impassive God. The height and glory of his nature do not prevent him from coming down to feel for me in my trouble and compassionate me in my sin. There is grief in his heart when he spares not his own Son; else he makes no sacrifice in my behalf. There is grief in his heart when he cries: "How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim!" Else there is no meaning in his tenderest words. And yet he is the ever-blessed God. "In the outer chambers," as one has said, "there is sorrow, but in the inner sanctuary there is joy." And it is this joy that he would impart to us—joy that outweighs and swallows up the sorrow. And he would impart it to us by drawing near to us in the person of Jesus. In Jesus we see a God who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities and who can give us succor in our time of need. In the light of this revelation I can take for truth all that William Blake has expressed in his touching poem:

Can I see another's woe
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief
And not seek for kind relief?
Can I see a falling tear
And not feel my sorrow's share?
Can a father see his child
Weep, not be with sorrow filled?
Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

And can He who smiles on all
Hear the wren with sorrows small,
Hear the small bird's grief and care,
Hear the woes that infants bear,
And not sit beside the nest
Pouring pity in their breast,
And not sit the cradle near
Weeping tear on infant's tear?
And not sit both night and day
Wiping all our tears away?
Oh, no, never can it be,
Never, never can it be!

He doth give his joy to all:
He becomes an infant small,
He becomes a man of woe,
He doth feel the sorrow too.
Think not thou canst sigh a sigh
And thy Maker is not by;
Think not thou canst weep a tear
And thy Maker is not near—
Oh, he gives to us his joy
That our grief he may destroy.
Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

But there was a second characteristic of Jesus' tears, of even more value than this. They were not only tears of sympathy for human grief, but *they were also tears of sorrow for human sin.* The eye of Jesus looked not merely at the outward and superficial trouble of the world, but at the inward and hidden cause of it, the sin which had "brought death into the world and all our woe." To him who had come as the world's deliverer, this one great fact of human sin revealed itself in the least things as well as in the greatest; it was the dominant and controlling fact of human life and history. We all know how a tender and religious soul will be shocked and distressed by evil words and acts that do not cause the majority of men the least uneasiness. The purer and clearer the mirror, the more easily will the least breath tarnish it. So there was an infinite susceptibility in Jesus to the remotest approaches, to the most indirect results, of sin. Every sight of disease caused him a suffering which we, with our duller sense, can hardly understand. That was the explanation of that deep sighing that he uttered when they brought to him the man that was deaf and that had an impediment in his speech. Though he was just about to say to those deaf ears, "Ephphatha" (be opened), and to loose the tongue that had never spoken plainly, he yet felt himself brought face to face with that sin which had caused all these miseries, and his whole frame was convulsed with sighing. How then must Jesus have felt when they brought him to the tomb where Lazarus lay, and into the immediate presence of that death, whose corruption presented the most fearful picture of the sin of the world? Jesus shrank from death more than any of us ever can, for he saw what death meant better than we. How dreadful was this separation of the soul from the body, a separation that left the body to loathsomeness and decay! But how much more dreadful that other death of which this was the symbol, that death which consisted in the separation of the soul from God, and the consequent corruption of all in it that was lovely and pure! All this came before the Saviour's mind as he stood before the tomb at Bethany. But this was not all. He saw that this "death had passed upon all men, for that all had sinned." This sealed tomb was but the type of myriads of tombs that had closed upon the loved and lost. These tears that streamed down Mary's and Martha's cheeks were but single drops of great rivers of sorrow that had been pouring forth from hearts crushed and broken ever since the first great sin. And this sorrow was nothing to the sorrow which sin should yet cause to thousands upon thousands of earth's inhabitants. And there was no exception, not one soul could ever escape; the wages of sin was death; the soul that sinneth, it must die. And he too must die, not because he had sinned, but because he had taken upon him the nature that had sinned. My friends, it was an anticipation of Gethsemane. The sin and death that rested like a pall upon the whole earth for a moment overshadowed the Saviour also. He groaned in spirit with a groaning humanity. He wept, as he wept in the garden, for a lost and ruined race.

In the autobiography of John Woolman, that eminent early missionary of the Society of Friends, we have an experience which enables us to see how intense the sense of others' sins may be.

> "O Lord my God," he cried, "the amazing horrors of darkness were gathered about me, and covered me all over, and I saw no way to go forth; I felt the depth and extent of the misery of my fellow-creatures separated from the divine harmony, and it was greater than I could bear, and I was crushed down under it. I lifted up my head, I stretched out my arm, but there was none to help me. I looked round about and was amazed. In the depths of misery, O Lord, I remembered that thou art omnipotent, that I had called thee Father. I had vision of a dull gloomy mass darkening half the heavens, and this, I was told, was human beings in as great misery as they could be and live. And I was mixed with them, so that henceforth I might not consider myself a distinct and separate being."

This was but a human experience. What must have been the experience of Christ, who was the center and heart of humanity and at the same time God manifest in the flesh! Do we not begin to see how sufferings such as these, grounded in his nature and natural connection with the human race, may have been the very means by which he bore the iniquities of us all and so made atonement for us? Surely in these tears of Christ we may recognize the proof that human sin was not something which he could look upon as foreign to him. He had come into connection with it, into responsibility for it. It was in view of his organic connection with humanity in its sin and death, that he shed those tears at Bethany.

I thank God that he wept, instead of taking the place of the Judge and declaring this death to be only sin's fit and righteous penalty. And here again I see in his weeping, and so taking part in our misery, the proof and demonstration of God's attitude toward us. We all know that God must be just, but until God reveals it to us, we do not know that he can consistently have mercy on those who deserve only his indignation and wrath. But Jesus came for the very purpose of declaring that God can be just and yet can justify him that believeth. In Jesus' taking part with us and bearing even the burdens which sin has laid upon us, we see God's plan and purpose of redemption, for "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Jesus weeping there, assures me that God is not only a Judge, but a Saviour. I see there a God who does not merely pity the trials of his creatures, but whose pity is great enough actually to *bear* their griefs and to *carry* their sorrows. I see a God who in the person of his Son puts his own great shoulders under the crushing burden of their debts and diseases and iniquities and miseries, and so constitutes himself the Lamb of God who takes upon himself and takes away the sins of the world. Whoever you may be then, O doubting disciple, whoever you may be then, O repenting sinner, see that there is love for you in the heart of God, for it is the heart of God that lies open to you in this assurance that "Jesus wept." He wept for your sins, because he saw them in all their guilt and enormity. He wept for your sins, because he had taken them upon him to answer for them. He wept for your sins, because he saw before him the death that was their due. And that weeping for them was the first sign and evidence that he had assumed the load of them and that he had begun even then to make propitiation for them, and "not for your sins only, but for the sins of the whole world." I bid you rejoice then and be glad, because you see the proof of an atoning God, a pardoning God, a sanctifying God, in Jesus' tears.

So the sympathy of our divine Redeemer is a sympathy that goes to the root of our sorrow and removes its cause; it is a sympathy that brings salvation. And having done so much, can we suppose that it will cease its work of love until it has put an end to all the ill that sin has wrought? How the sympathy of Jesus and his participation in their grief must have strengthened the faith of those sisters and prepared them for the final act of his power when he raised Lazarus from the dead! Shall we have less faith in him than they? nay, shall we not have more? Death has taken from us again and again the forms of those we loved and who loved Jesus. Can we not trust that the same divine voice that called forth Lazarus and restored him to those two rejoicing hearts, will also safely keep and finally raise in glory the precious dust which we have laid away so sadly and so tenderly? There was a trial of Mary's and Martha's faith while Jesus delayed his coming. But did not the Saviour's righteousness "shine forth as the sun and his goodness as the light," when he came at last? And was there not a growth and advancement in the sisters' knowledge of Christ that was more than a recompense for the sorrow and anxiety of that long delay? So shall it be with us who pass through days of darkness, our loved ones severed from us, and our trust in Jesus often shaken by the storm. "Now for a season we are in heaviness through manifold temptations," but it is all in order "that the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." And then, when Jesus comes, he will bring back again to us, as he did to Martha and Mary, the living forms of the dear departed, and brother and sister, husband and wife, mother and child, friend and friend in Christ shall rejoice together. Jesus' tears and the tears of his disciples shall not be in vain. "For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death."

Jesus wept! those tears are over
  But his heart is still the same;
Kinsman, Friend, and elder Brother
  Is his everlasting name;
    Saviour, who can love like thee,
    Gracious One of Bethany?

When the pangs of trial seize us,
  When the waves of sorrow roll,
I will lay my head on Jesus,
  Pillow of the troubled soul.
    Surely, none can feel like thee,
    Weeping One of Bethany!

Jesus wept and still in glory,
  He can mark each mourner's tear;
Living to retrace the story
  Of the hearts he solaced here.
    Lord, when I am called to die,
    Let me think of Bethany!

Jesus wept! that tear of sorrow
  Is a legacy of love;
Yesterday, to-day, to-morrow,
  He the same doth ever prove.
    Thou art all in all to me,
    Living One of Bethany!

Such is the blessing to us of Jesus' tears. How those tears have comforted the world! Thousands who have been alone in their affliction and have had no friend or helper, have remembered that Jesus wept and have felt the burden lifted from them by the sweetness of that thought. Thousands who have been oppressed with sin and bound with iron chains of evil habit have had brought to their memories the picture of a weeping Saviour, and by the power of it have felt the chains fall away and the gladness of a new hope springing up within their hearts. Why was it? Simply because the Spirit of God showed them more or less distinctly that Jesus was no ordinary man, weeping for his own grief, but that he was the image of the invisible God, sorrowing with and for the creatures of his hand, his erring, suffering children, and therein giving the pledge of his everlasting love and his almighty power to comfort and to save. Therefore every one of us may say: "Jesus wept" for me, and I need weep no more for any sorrows of my own or for any sins, for he can and will "save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him." But have you noticed this,—how dependent we are for this teaching with regard to God, upon the tears of the man Christ Jesus? God teaches men the infinite feelings of his heart, by the sympathy and sorrow that appear on Jesus' face. From what the man felt we learn how God felt. From the earthly things we learn of the heavenly things.

My brethren and sisters in whom Christ dwells, be taught a lesson by this. Remember that just as you have learned of God from Jesus' tears, so the world will learn of God and of Christ from your tears. If Christ is in you, then your heart will be moved and your tears will flow in sympathy with the wants and woes, and in sorrow for the sins and suffering and lost around you. Though your heart may be so fixed on God that you know no transports or paroxysms of grief, you will deeply feel, and you will not think it unmanly or unwomanly to yield sometimes to the silent unbidden tear that courses down the cheek. If you are Christ's, then you are bound not to look upon any man's sorrow or sin as foreign to you, but to identify yourselves as Jesus did with the sorrow and sin of the world, that as much as in you lies you may alleviate the sorrow and remove the sin. Thus you are to be representatives of Jesus, and the tears of Jesus are to be reproduced in you. If you have ever been in sorrow, think how much it was to you to have one Christian friend silently grasp your hand and, while he tried to speak, give over for his tears, and then sit silent with you weeping! If you have ever been burdened with a sense of sin, remember how like an angel of mercy that friend seemed who pointed you tearfully to the cross of the Lord Jesus, as to the refuge where he too, a sinner, found pardon and peace. Remember that these did all this for you, only because they were following in the footsteps of Jesus, and then go yourselves and do likewise. If you have ever thought it a virtue to maintain an immovable and unsympathetic demeanor, or to restrain your truest and tenderest feelings so that no man should know that you possessed them, oh, take this stumbling-block out of your brother's way, and imitate the simplicity and sympathy of the Saviour. Without *expressing* a feeling for others' sins and griefs, you cannot be following Christ aright; without *having* a feeling for others' sins and griefs, you cannot be following Christ at all. For so long as grief and sin last, they are to be sorrowed with and for, and it is God's plan of grace, that grief should be cured by grief, even as Christ by his vicarious sacrifice took the root of all our griefs away. So we are to labor—full of a tearful sympathy with human wants and trials, full of a glowing confidence in Christ's power to take these all away—labor in eradicating the last remains of this spreading network of evil from the earth. And presently we shall find that the darkness of this world brightens with the dawn of that better day when "God shall wipe all tears from our eyes."

Not first the glad and then the sorrowful,
  But first the sorrowful and then the glad;
Tears for a day—for earth of tears is full—
  Then we forget that we were ever sad.

'Tis first the night—dark night of storm and war,
  Thick night of heavy clouds and veiled skies;
Then the fair sparkle of the morning star,
  That bids the saints awake and dawn arise.

XLI

PREVENIENT GRACE[1]

The God of my mercy shall prevent me. (Ps. 59: 10.)

THIS is a text which provoked the gratitude of Augustine, and which that great church Father thought one of the jewels of the word of God. Why does it not arouse the same feeling in us? Simply because two words of it are so imperfectly comprehended.

One is the word "mercy." This does not mean God's goodness to the righteous, but his undeserved favor to sinners. Whoever would draw the line between the unsaved and the saved should draw it here: the one cast themselves as guilty and helpless upon God's plan of mercy in the gospel, while the other think to secure salvation by what they have done or can do. The Scriptures give us no warrant for believing that those who pride themselves upon their good works or their righteousness obtain the favor of God. If any are saved, it is those who trust, not to God's justice, but to his compassion, and who call God, above all things, "the God of my mercy."

The other word is the word "prevent." This word has lost to us the significance which it had to King James' translators. It does not mean "to hinder" or "to thwart," but "to go before," "to anticipate." Hence the doctrine of the text is that God mercifully goes before those who love him, preparing their way, marking out their path, helping their success, insuring their salvation. If the text is true, then the Christian shall find everywhere and always that God is there before him for good. My subject then is THE PREVENIENT GRACE OF GOD. Let me show you in how many ways "the God of my mercy shall prevent me."

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[1] A sermon preached in the Wilder Street Baptist Church, Rochester, N. Y., at the ordination of Rev. I. M. De Puy, September 21, 1897.

I. Notice, first, that *all present gifts and blessings point back to preparations made by God, some of them long before we were born. In nature* God goes before. The cold and dreariness of winter are prepared for by the warmth and the harvests of the autumn. The leaves are even now turning to crimson and gold, and God is clothing the trees with a coat of many colors, richer than Jacob ever gave to Joseph. The leaves fall to protect and fertilize the earth beneath. The fruit ripens as a provision for the months when there is no fruit. But even this fruit had to be prepared for by God's sunshine and showers. Not simply man's cultivation, but far back of that, the clearing of forests, glacial erosion, alluvial deposits, all went before. Our coal fires are but the pouring out of so much bottled sunshine, and the bottling took place long before we were born. The trees of which the coal was made were trees of Jehovah, because he planted them. And because we see in all this a beneficent design and the foresight of our God, we celebrate our Thanksgiving Days, and our Harvest-Homes. So we comfort ourselves in the months that are chilly and forlorn, in the assurance that these are only giving the earth a rest for renewed production.

> Whoever sees 'mid winter's fields and snow
> The silent harvest of the future good,
> God's power must know,

and must recognize the truth of the text: "The God of my mercy shall prevent me," that is, shall go before me, preparing for my happiness and welfare.

In redemption God goes before. The Christian ministry and the Christian church preceded our individual existence. We are the heirs of all the ages. Christ came before we were born. His coming was prepared by the long ages of the Mosaic Economy, and that in turn by the counsels of eternity. That was a very effective appeal of the lover, in the novel, to the object of his affection, that he had loved her ever since he had first set his eyes upon her in her childhood. But God loved us before the morning stars sang together at the dawn of creation. He chose us in Christ before the world was. In eternity past the redemption of his people was planned. Christ was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. His word to us is: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." If God's purpose to save me, a sinner, antedated creation, surely I can say: "The God of my mercy shall prevent me"—shall anticipate my doings and even my sins.

II. Observe now, in the second place, that *the actual beginnings of our life, secular and religious,* *reveal a prearranging divine hand. In Providence* God goes before. Some one has said that if a man proposes to be a gentleman or a scholar he must take great pains in the selection of his ancestors, and Oliver Wendell Holmes declares that every man is an omnibus in which all his ancestors are seated. But how evident it is, that it is no thanks to us if our ancestry has been a fortunate one. Our parentage is chosen not *by* us but *for* us. How many good traits there are which are outcroppings of a father's or a mother's character! The place of our birth and our early environment, how little we have had to do with determining these! And yet what different beings we would have been if we had been born among the Hottentots, or had found our associates among the children of the Five Points. We talk about a divine guidance and education of the race. But there is a divine guidance and education of the individual as well. God fits us for places, and fits places for us. The meaning of many a minute event in our youthful history is disclosed only when we get far on in life. A teacher's instructions or the warnings of a friend fortify us for the temptations of our manhood. A seemingly chance decision, a casual acquaintance, a single word borne to our ears, determines our destiny. The king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way. Have we not stood there too, and taken the step to the right, which led to prosperity and safety, when a step to the left would have led to temporal and eternal ruin? To us, as to Cyrus, God can say: "I girded thee, though thou hast not known me." Now that we *do* know, shall we not say with gratitude: "The

God of my mercy shall prevent me"—shall ever go before to anticipate my dangers and to save me from my sins?

But *in conversion,* God especially goes before. We came to God weighed down with the guilt of our transgressions, and seeking some way by which we might purge ourselves from sin. It was an infinite debt we owed, yet we had not a single farthing wherewith to pay. Can we ever forget how in our despair Christ came to us, with his wounded feet and bleeding hands, and showed us that he had paid our debt, and on the cross had made such full atonement that now there was nothing left for us to do but to accept the pardon which he offered without money and without price? We had been trying to find the way to God

Till late we heard our Saviour say:
"Come hither, soul; I am the Way!"

In the sacrifice and death of Christ, in the execution as well as in the preparation of salvation, "the God of my mercy shall prevent me"—shall provide beforehand for all my needs.

Later on *in our Christian experience,* we ask ourselves how we ever came to seek Christ at all. At the time, our coming to him seems to be wholly our own act. We seem to be sovereign. Salvation appears to be a matter of our own wills. And unquestionably without our willing and doing we never could have been saved. But afterward, with better sense of our weakness and sinfulness and dependence upon God, it occurs to us that, if we cannot keep ourselves in the way of life, we never could have found that way alone. We confess that it was only God that worked in us to will and to do, and made us willing in the day of his power. He prepared our environment, brought to bear the means of grace, exerted a mighty influence upon our hearts. He made sin seem hateful, the world seem worthless, Christ seem our only hope.

Why was I made to hear Thy voice
  And enter while there's room,
When thousands make a wretched choice
  And rather starve than come?
'Twas the same love that spread the feast
  That gently forced me in;
Else I had still refused to taste,
  And perished in my sin!

No truly converted man gives praise to himself for his turning to God. His cry is rather: " Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name give glory." The words of the apostle when he describes Christians as " Created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," and Christ's own words when he says: " Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," are only statements in other forms of the principle of the text: " The God of my mercy shall prevent (or go before) me."

A third fact is worthy of attention, this, namely, that: *All subsequent effort for God, when scrutinized closely, shows that God has an unseen initiative in it all. In prayer,* God goes before. In our early prayers we seem to pray alone. God is far away and late to come. Prayer is an inward struggle without effect outside of us. But at last we learn that God has more interest in our praying than we have, and that he incites and sustains all true prayer.

> Prayer is the breath of God in man
> Returning whence it came.

One of the most precious and affecting recollections of my childhood is that of my mother's teaching me how to pray. Every Saturday afternoon, when the day's work was done, she took me, a child of four or five years, into a large closet, and there, as we knelt by a wooden chest, she suggested to me the thoughts, and, when I could not command the words, she put into my mouth the very words, of prayer. I shall never forget how one day, as I had succeeded in uttering some words of my own, I was surprised by drops falling upon my face. They were my mother's tears. That mother's teaching me how to pray has given me my best illustration of the Holy Spirit's influence in prayer. When we know not what to pray for as we ought, he, with more than a mother's skill and tenderness, helps our infirmities, and makes intercession within us, while Christ makes intercession for us before God's throne. All effectual prayer is the work of that blessed Spirit in the heart, making intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Such prayer will be answered because,

> When God inclines the heart to pray,
> He hath an ear to hear.

Hence we pray for the spirit of prayer. We cry: "Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name":

"Draw us, and we will run after thee"; and God himself says: "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear," because his activity goes before ours, and in prayer "the God of my mercy prevents me."

In Christian work, also, God goes before. We struggle against duty and decide at last to perform it. We do what ought to have been done long before, and then we find that God meets us more than half-way, and overwhelms us with the abundance of the blessing to ourselves and to others which the doing of that one little act occasions. We thought our hand withered and we could not stretch it forth, but when we obeyed Christ's command, behold, he went before and gave strength. We thought ourselves dumb and could not speak, but when we broke down our pride and made the effort, he was already there to put words into our mouths and joy into our hearts. We learn the meaning of the Scripture: "Thou *meetest* him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness," and we conclude that not we ourselves, but he, has "wrought all our works in us." I never saw a work of grace begin in a church of which I was pastor, without first struggling myself with some question of duty, usually the duty of personally going to some one whom I very much disliked to address and talking with him about his soul's salvation. But more than once or twice I have found, when I conquered my unwillingness and actually went, that the Spirit of the Lord had gone before me; the person to whom I spoke was ready for my coming, yielded to Christ, and was followed into the kingdom of God by many others.

Never be afraid to speak or work for Christ, for you can always say: "The God of my mercy shall prevent me"—shall go before me to make my word and work successful.

But now take yet one more truth contained in this text. It is this: *The dark and sorrowful things of life are signs of God's going before us to prepare our triumph and the triumph of his cause.* Change is necessary to progress, and God is in it. This is true of the individual Christian. God treats us as the mother bird treats her eaglets; as she thrusts them out from the nest to teach them to fly, but when they weary and are ready to fall swoops under them and bears them up, so God pushes us out from our places of quiet and security, to teach us faith in him. As he is before us to permit the trial, so his everlasting arms are under us to prevent the trial from being greater than we can bear. "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path."

And this is true of the church as well as of the individual. Israel in every age has had to reach her promised land through many sea-passages and wilderness-ways. But it is God who goes before, and the God of Jacob is her rearward. As the people of God in the old time had the pillar of cloud preceding them by day and the blazing column of fire by night, so Jehovah leads his church to-day. Christ has many *avant-courriers.* Inventions and reforms, pestilences and wars, popular delusions and commercial depressions, the good will and the ill will of kings, persecutions and revolutions, failures and deaths, all prepare the way of his conquering church. Let no man be discouraged at the corruptions or the persecutions that menace her. "When iniquity shall come in like a flood, then the Spirit of the Lord shall set up a standard against it." God is not far away,— he is here. In the very weaving of their web of villainy God will make the wicked provide for its disentanglement. "The wrath of man he will make to praise him, and with the remainder of wrath he will gird himself," using it as his sword, that is, he will make the very passions of his enemies subservient to his purposes. And as for his people, they can say triumphantly: "Righteousness shall go before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps." In all the changes of this earthly life, the God of my mercy shall prevent me, and the whole universe, so far as it is merely physical and material, shall be but the scaffolding for the erection of his spiritual church.

Let us remember too, that as change is necessary to progress, so *death is necessary to glory, and God is in the death of the righteous.* Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. The shepherd always goes before his sheep. Christ leads through no darker paths than he has trod before, and the Christian can walk with courage even through the valley of the shadow of death, provided only he can say that "he leadeth me." At the end of one of the fiercest battles of the Franco-Prussian war, news was brought to King William that one of his bravest young officers, a man of noble birth and great promise, was dying of a gunshot wound. The king proceeded to the tent where he lay and said to him: "My dear boy, I trust all is well with you." The young man raised himself with his last breath and gave the military salute with the words: "All is well where your majesty leads!" Then he fell back a corpse. How many soldiers of Christ have in like manner said in dying: "All is well where Jesus leads!" To them death is not a going from, but a going to, the Lord. He himself, who has gone on ahead of his people to prepare for them a place, comes at death to take them to be with him forever. If he comes to take, and if he is with us in the departure, we may be sure that he will be there to receive. The Shepherd who led us here through our desert journey will lead us there by the river of the water of life. We shall find throughout eternity that he ever goes before. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath *prepared* for them who love him." Away then with all care or doubt or fear, either in our own deaths or in the deaths of those we love. "When I awake," in the resurrection morning, "I am still with thee," for on earth or in heaven, in time or eternity, the word will still hold true that "the God of my mercy shall prevent me," shall go before me for my present and everlasting good.

Thus the text presents to us a new phase of God's omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence. Everywhere and always God is present, God anticipates, God provides. "Thou hast beset me behind and before," says the psalmist, "and hast laid thy hand upon me." If that hand were laid upon us for evil, how heavy the hand would be! But it is only for good. All these attributes of God are engaged on the side of the Christian. It is these very attributes that compel all things to work together for good to those who love God. How great the possessions of the Christian who can say: "O God, thou art my God!"

He feeds in pastures large and fair
  Of love and truth divine;
O child of God, O glory's heir,
  How rich a lot is thine!

Could there be a greater motive to submission and trust? If the omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent God makes all things in the universe work together for my good, should I not esteem it my greatest honor and joy to be a worker together with him? If God is willing to lead me, ought I not to be willing to follow? May God help us here and now to give ourselves unreservedly to him, since our only hope, our only joy, our only salvation, is to say from the heart: "The God of my mercy shall prevent me."

XLII

THE SUFFERING AND THE BLESSED GOD[1]

THE Christian life is a life of mingled joy and sorrow, and the Christian minister must know, not only the joy of the Lord, but also the fellowship of his sufferings. It is well for the pastor, and it is well for his people, to know at the start that this is to be expected, because this is the natural and necessary result of sharing in the life of God. God's life is a life of mingled joy and sorrow. I wish to set this truth before you; and I take two texts. The first you will find in Isa. 63:9: "In all their affliction he was afflicted," and the second in 1 Tim. 1:11: "The glorious gospel of the blessed God."

The suffering, and yet the blessed, God! It is a strange contrast, and even a seeming contradiction. God is said in one passage to be afflicted, and in another to be blessed. The two texts are only representatives of many others which might be cited. On the one hand we read that God repented that he had made man and it grieved him at his heart. On the other hand he is said to be God over all, blessed forever. It is no wonder that theologians, in their consideration of these passages, have been perplexed and divided. Some have thought that the very perfection of God required them to maintain that God cannot suffer. Others have held that a God who cannot suffer must be destitute of feeling, and so cannot be God at all. The Scripture seems to teach that God can and does suffer, and yet that in, and on account of, that very suffering, God is blessed. Let us try to get the elements of the problem before us, and then to learn the lessons of doctrine and practice which it teaches us.

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[1] A sermon preached at the ordination of William Gaylord James, as pastor of the Baptist Church, Fort Plain, N. Y., June 27, 1902.

First, then, God must suffer, or else he must be without holiness and without love. But God is holy, and his holiness involves a profound desire that his creatures should be holy as he is holy. The urgency of his law, and the inevitableness of the misery that follows the violation of that law, show that this desire is fundamental to God's being. He cannot look upon sin with allowance; nay, he is angry with the wicked every day. And that hatred to sin involves suffering. Henry Drummond, in his evangelistic meetings, drew all hearts to him. Great transgressors told him the dreadful secrets of their lives. He was appalled at their confessions, and one day he said: "I am sick of the sins of these men,—how can God bear it?" Ah, yes, how can the Holy One bear it? If Henry Drummond suffered when he learned the sins of a few, can God fail to suffer, when he has spread before him continually the sins of all?

But God is not only holiness, he is also love. And love does not make others a mere appendage to itself. It rather merges itself in their interest and happiness. It rejoices in their joy; it weeps with their sorrow. Love is impossible without sympathy; and sympathy, as the etymology of the word indicates, is a suffering with others. Love is impossible without sacrifice—the giving up of our pleasure for others' good, and sacrifice means some measure at least of suffering. We do not regard an unsympathetic man as worthy of admiration. It is the man of tender heart, of broad affections, of self-sacrificing nature, that best answers to our idea of humanity. And shall we think that God is less compassionate than man, that he in whose image we are made feels less than we the sorrows and griefs of his creatures?

I know that it is hard for us to realize that God's greatness is consistent with suffering. Can one so powerful and so wise feel deeply for creatures so weak and insignificant as we? Well, what is our verdict with regard to human beings? Can a man who is truly great be moved by the sufferings of a little child? Do we not see that his ability to feel is the very measure of his greatness, and that inability to feel is his shame and degradation? And yet there have been teachers of doctrine to declare that the greatness of God requires him to be impassive, unaffected by our earthly trials or our earthly sins, and they have spoken of him as if he were an Egyptian sphinx with face of stony calm, or an arctic iceberg with glittering sides but frozen heart.

Tennyson describes the Lotus Eaters as longing for the immovable quiet of the gods:

> Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
> In the hollow Lotus-land to live and lie reclined
> On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind.
> For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurled

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world;
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.

And Goethe gives us a simiiar picture in his " Song of the Fates ":

The gods be your terror,
Ye children of men;
They hold the dominion
In hands everlasting,
All free to exert it
As listeth their will.

Let him fear them doubly
Whom e'er they've exalted!
On crags and on cloud-piles
The seats are made ready
Around the gold tables.

Dissension arises:
Then tumble the feasters
Reviled and dishonored
To gulfs of deep midnight;
And look ever vainly
In fetters of darkness
For judgment that's just.

But they remain seated
At feasts never-failing
Around the gold tables.
They stride at a footstep
From mountain to mountain;
Through jaws of abysses
Steams toward them the breathing
Of suffocate Titans,
Like offerings of incense,
A light-rising vapor.

They turn, the proud masters,
From whole generations
The eye of their blessing:
Nor will in the children
The once well-beloved
Still eloquent features
Of ancestor see.

Thank God, this is heathenism and not Christianity. And yet this heathenism is the natural thought of the soul that is alienated from God by its sin. It sees its own hard heart in the Godhead; because it has lost the spirit of God it cannot believe either in the holiness or in the love of the Father. One might almost say that God's whole revelation is one long and elaborate effort to correct this error, and to convince men that he is pure, yet of tender mercy. The grief and anger which are ascribed to him in view of human sin, together with the sorrow and compassion which are caused by human suffering, are proofs that his greatness is greatness of holiness and greatness of love. When we are told that he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, words are used which imply that God suffered in giving up his Son just as Abraham suffered in giving up Isaac on Mount Moriah. When we are entreated to grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, we are taught that God's heart is wounded by our affronts and our neglects, as truly as a mother's heart is wounded by the disobedience of her child.

And yet, as if to remove the last lingering doubt that God can suffer, God was manifest in the flesh. Jesus Christ, in his sorrow and sympathy, his tears and his agony, is the revealer of God's feelings toward the race. "He that hath seen me," says the Lord, "hath seen the Father: how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" When we see Jesus grieved at the hardness of men's hearts, pained at their slowness of understanding, angered by their hypocrisy, distressed by their selfishness, revolting from their impurity, heart-broken by their ingratitude, we have a vivid picture of the feelings of God's heart. His groaning when he opened the ears of the deaf man, and his weeping at Lazarus' tomb even when he was about to raise him from the dead, show us how God sympathizes with human suffering, and sorrows over human sin. As we cannot conceive of love without self-sacrifice, or of self-sacrifice without suffering, Jesus' self-sacrifice and Jesus' sufferings are simply a revelation of the self-sacrifice and suffering of God.

But now we come to a second truth which is even more strange and mysterious than this one that God can suffer. It is this: "If God suffers, then he must suffer infinitely, for he is one with his whole creation." The amount of one's sympathetic suffering depends upon the greatness of one's being and upon one's nearness to those who suffer. The ox can see its fellow writhing in pain, yet go on cropping the grass with perfect unconcern. The little child can play with its toys while its mother is dying, and only now and then is it moved to thoughtfulness and tears. Our capacity for suffering is exactly proportioned to our maturity and to the breadth of our being. Christ could suffer as none of us can, because his was the large and sensitive and unselfish heart that could feel the woes of others as his own. His purity made him alive to every breath of evil; his tenderness turned every slight into a blow; and every blow struck him to the heart.

If Christ then is the image of God, and God is infinite holiness and infinite love, must not God's suffering itself be infinite? Our fathers used to escape this conclusion by picturing God as disassociated from his universe. They held to a sort of deism, which removed him from the things he had made. As Carlyle said, he was "an absentee God, sitting idle ever since the first Sabbath, at the outside of the universe, and seeing it go." But we have gotten beyond all this, and we believe in an immanent God, who is not simply beyond the stars, but also in all worlds and in all spirits, himself the force of all forces and the life of all lives. He is omnipresent, and in him we live and move and have our being. He scans every event and every thought, every evil desire and evil deed, for he is present at its inception and at its execution. He knows the sorrow of every mourner, for he who made the heart to feel these depths of loneliness and anguish is in the heart to witness all its prayers of grief and desolation. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4). "And he bare them and carried them all the days of old" (Isa. 63:9). No sparrow falls to the ground without our Father, and precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

A newly converted heathen, when he told his experience, said the thought of his past life made him pity God! Was there not a great truth there? God made a world of beauty. Man has ravaged the fields and turned them into deserts. God has been hurt by this spoiling of the work of his hands. How many sweet infantile lives open their petals like flowers, only to be plucked and defiled by human passion and sin! God has had to stand silently by, feeling every attack upon the purity of his creatures like a stab at his own heart. Do we think that Indian famines and Chinese massacres cause no suffering to him? Ah, we feel only a little because we see only a little. God feels all because he sees all, and what he feels he feels with all his heart—a heart of infinite hatred for the wrong, and of infinite pity for the wronged.

It has been a hard task to teach us the greatness of the suffering of God, but there are two ways in which our finite minds are enabled in some degree to take it in. One is that of the incarnate Christ. Gethsemane and Calvary teach us how great is God's suffering, for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and he that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father. In the garden Jesus came in contact with human sin; before his imagination there rose the dreadful spectacle of a humanity alienated from God. As you abhor dirt, lust, hypocrisy, cruelty, so Christ abhorred sin. Yet this sin had ravaged God's dominions and had taken captive his noblest children. Can a father see his daughter the victim of a betrayer, lost to purity, and going down to death, without shame and agony that blanch the hair and paralyze the heart? Christ saw ten thousand cases like that; aye, the whole mass and weight of the world's sin and sorrow fell upon him, till not only beads of sweat stood upon his brow, but the very blood was forced through the pores and fell in great drops to the ground in the intensity of his suffering. All this, with the darkened heavens and the dying agony and the broken heart of the cross—these were not simply Christ's sufferings—they were God's also—and the apostle does not hesitate to speak of the church of God which he purchased with his own blood, for Christ's blood was the very blood of God.

The other way in which he teaches us is that of the Holy Spirit. The groanings that cannot be uttered, with which at times he fills the breast of the Christian, are simply an overflow into him of the sorrow of God's heart over the sin and misery of the world. It is not in our moments of joy, but in our moments of sorrow, that God comes nearest to us. We enter into closest reunion with him when we know the fellowship of his sufferings—his infinite sufferings on account of human wickedness and calamity.

O Thou, that from eternity
  Upon thy wounded heart hast borne
Each pang and cry of misery
  Wherewith our human hearts are torn,

Thy love upon the grievous cross
  Doth glow, the beacon light of time;
Forever sharing pain and loss
  With every man in every clime.

How vast, how vast thy sacrifice,
  As ages come and ages go,
Still waiting till it shall suffice
  To draw the last cold heart and slow!

God is passible, or capable of suffering; that is the first truth. God suffers in proportion to the breadth of his being and his nearness to his creatures; that is the second truth. And now recurs our problem, how can such suffering consist with his blessedness? The answer is the third truth which I would inculcate: God is the ever-blessed God, because this suffering is the condition of joy and is swallowed up in joy. Difficult as is this relation, I think we can to some extent understand it. Let us remember that even suffering may be borne joyfully, if it is the fit thing in its time and place. I may enter into the suffering of a convicted sinner, and yet be glad because at last he sees his sins as they are. In all sympathy there is joy, because it is fit that I should rejoice with those who do rejoice and should weep with those who weep. If I did not sorrow with the sorrowing, and mourn over men that are lost, I should feel myself less than a man. Not the suffering, but the not suffering, should cause me pain. So God's recognition of need and his response to it, while they bring sorrow. bring also joy—the joy of fitness, of congruity, of right. Let us remember too, that God sees, as we cannot, how all this sorrow and sin is part of a far-reaching plan of infinite wisdom, in which all things work together for ultimate good. If even a child can submit to a surgical operation gladly, for the sake of the health that will accrue; if the patriot can endure exile for liberty and country; if the martyr can find the fires of the stake a bed of roses—surely He who sees the end from the beginning can endure suffering for the sake of what is to come thereby. Here too, the key to the mystery is furnished by our Lord himself, who in prospect of his sufferings rejoiced in spirit, and for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. The reason why we do not always rejoice in tribulations is that our weak faith loses sight of God's plan and of the goal to which he is leading us. God himself never loses sight of these. We are involved in the smoke and dust of the battle; the great Commander occupies a vantage-ground from which he can observe the whole field and can seize the triumph from afar. He is the God of hope, and he lives in constant expectation of the day when his enemies shall be made the footstool of his feet.

God is infinitely greater than his creation, and he sees all human wickedness and woe as a part of his great plan. His suffering in and with his creation has been all foreseen and undertaken, for good and sufficient reasons, before the world began. If suffering limits God at all, it is not a limitation from without, but only a self-limitation of love. We are entitled to attribute to him only such passibleness as is consistent with perfection, only such suffering as is consistent with a higher joy. In combining passibleness with blessedness we must permit blessedness to be the controlling factor, for our fundamental idea of God is that of absolute perfection. Martensen expresses the truth in these words: "This limitation is swallowed up in the inner life of perfection which God lives, in total independence of his creation, and in triumphant prospect of the fulfilment of his great designs." We may therefore say with the old theosophic writers: "In the outer chambers is sadness, but in the inner chambers is unmixed joy."

There was a famous Greek fire which burned under water. So there is a blessedness, not simply in spite of sorrow, but in sorrow and because of sorrow. Sorrow dominated by faith becomes joy. In Gethsemane when Christ said, " Not my will, but thine, be done," angels came and ministered to him. On the cross the saddest words ever spoken on earth, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? " were followed by the most exultant, " It is finished! " And Christian experience in its measure repeats the experience of Christ.

Many years ago, in the church of which I was then pastor in Cleveland, Ohio, there was a lady whom the whole city knew as " Mother Rouse." Mrs. Rouse was an extraordinary woman. Small, wiry, and active, she had intellect, insight, judgment, calmness, decision, together with executive and administrative ability of the very first order. She could have made a good manager of a great railway, and she could have commanded a battleship. During our Civil War, she had been president of our Sanitary Commission for the State of Ohio, and had organized the women of the State for the purpose of sending nurses and hospital supplies to the front. Her face is now perpetuated in bronze in the noble monument erected in Cleveland to the heroes and heroines of our great struggle for national unity and freedom. No one in the whole State did more for our Union soldiers than did she. When the war was over and she no longer had the sick and wounded to care for she gave her thoughts and energies once more to the church and to the saving of souls.

She had a marvelous intensity of feeling, yet a marvelous self-control in the expression of it. In prayer meeting, when she rose to speak there was a breathless silence, for Mother Rouse would put more into five minutes than most people could put into an hour. Two months after I had begun my work, in a crowded evening meeting, Mrs. Rouse arose. There was evidently a burden upon her heart. With burning words, she told of a struggle and agony she had been enduring in prayer. She spoke of her distress for the church, and her anxiety for the unconverted, in a way that seemed almost like a voice from another world. I could only think of the suffering of Christ in the garden. But suddenly, in the very midst of this description of her spiritual anguish for sinners, her countenance lighted up, her voice changed, and she continued: "But I have never before come so near to Jesus; never yet have had such joy; my soul has been full to overflowing of the glory and the peace of God!" Do you wonder that a revival of religion followed, in which more than a hundred were brought to Christ and united with the church? Suffering and joy went together. God had imparted to her something of his feeling. God is not impassible; he can suffer and does suffer infinitely for the sins of his creatures; yet this suffering on account of sin is consistent with his blessedness, nay, is turned into a condition and means of blessedness. As Christ was anointed with the oil of joy above his fellows even when he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, so of the divine nature it may be said:

Though round its base the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

But I would not leave the subject here. There are two applications of it which are of vast importance to us. On the one hand it frees us from a dogmatic doubt, and on the other hand it delivers us from an ethical error. In Miss Fowler's story of the Farringtons we have the dogmatic doubt suggested. Alan Tremaine criticizes the whole scheme of Christianity, because it attributes to a personal God the creation of a world so full of suffering and of sin, and because it bows down before a suffering Deity who is stricken and crucified in order to save it. Have we not already seen the answer to this problem and found relief from this doubt? God is love, and he has not willingly grieved and afflicted the children of men. He has made them free, only with a view to their becoming holy and blessed. He could not make them free without the possibility of a fall. Their fall and misery has brought more sorrow to him than it has ever caused to them, for the infinite One can truly say: " Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."

I am glad to quote a great Roman Catholic theologian here. " What? " asks the Abbe Gratry, " do you really suppose that the personal God, free and intelligent, loving and good, who knows every detail of human torture and hears every sigh, this God who sees, who loves, as we do and more than we do, do you believe that he is present and looks pitilessly on what breaks your heart, on what to him must be the spectacle of Satan reveling in the blood of humanity? History teaches that men so feel for sufferers that they have been drawn to die with them, so that the very executioners have become the next martyrs. And will you represent God, the absolute goodness, as alone impassible? Ah, it is here that our evangelical faith comes in, . . Here is the true God. He has suffered from the beginning in all who have suffered. He has been hungry in all who have hungered. He has been immolated in all and with all—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The suffering God answers all the doubts that arise at the sight of human suffering. To know that God is suffering in it makes that suffering more awful, but it gives strength, and life, and hope, for we know that, if God is in it, suffering is the road to victory, and that, if he shares our suffering, we shall share his joy and his crown." And Professor Royce says: "When you suffer, your sufferings are God's sufferings—not his external work, not his external penalty, not the fruit of his neglect, but identically his own personal woe. In you God himself suffers precisely as you do, and has all your concern in overcoming this grief."

If God has suffered from the beginning in all human suffering and on account of all human sin, then it is only to be expected that in Christ, who is God manifest in the flesh, that suffering of God should be manifested. Holy love necessarily renders Christ a suffering Saviour. His suffering is due to holiness, which joins sin and suffering indissolubly together, but it is borne by love, that cannot and will not separate itself from the sinners. In a world of sin, only a suffering Christ would be a divine Christ; for the very fact that he is strong makes him ready to bear the burdens of the weak. When Peter would keep the Saviour from the cross, Jesus replies: "Get thee behind me, Satan"; and, just as he is entering upon his passion, he speaks of his elevation upon that same cross as a "lifting up." The whole principle of the atonement is here. There is nothing arbitrary about it. It is inwrought into the very constitution of the universe, for love cannot help bearing with and for the sinner the suffering which holiness has appointed for sin's penalty. And the cross is simply the focusing, the picturing, and the demonstrating, of this age-long suffering of God. It shows men the feeling of God's heart toward sin; it leads men to hate the sin that has brought death to his only Son; it draws men to love and obey him who was thus lifted up for their salvation; for the suffering of God in Christ is not simply penal,—it is also redemptive, and we can say with the psalmist (68:19): "Blessed be the Lord, who daily beareth our burden, even the God who is our salvation."

As I have quoted from a Roman Catholic writer, let me also quote from a Protestant, Professor Bowne of the Boston University. His words are these: "Something like this work of grace was a moral necessity with God. It was an awful responsibility that was taken when our human race was launched with its fearful possibilities of good and evil. God thereby put himself under infinite obligation to care for his human family; and reflection on his position as Creator and Ruler, instead of removing, only make more manifest this obligation. So long as we conceive God as sitting apart in supreme ease and self-satisfaction, he is not love at all, but only a reflex of our own selfishness and vulgarity. So long as we conceive him as bestowing blessing upon us out of his infinite fulness, but at no real cost to himself, he sinks below the moral heroes of our race. There is ever a higher thought possible, until we see God taking the world upon his heart, entering the fellowship of our sorrow, and becoming the supreme burden-bearer and leader of all in self-sacrifice. Then only are the possibilities of grace and condescension and love and moral heroism filled up, so that nothing higher remains. And the work of Christ himself, so far as it was an historical event, must be viewed, not merely as a piece of history, but also as a manifestation of that cross which was hidden in the divine love from the foundation of the world, and which is not involved in the existence of the human world at all."

God's suffering frees us from an ethical error, as well as from a dogmatic doubt. The error is that of fancying that we have no suffering to undergo, and no cross to bear. We naturally shrink from suffering, and think it inconsistent with blessedness. We seek pleasure only, and struggle against pain. But the life that has in it no sympathy with others' wants, and feels no pain on account of others' sins, is a very ignoble life, it is not the Christian life. We cannot be Christians without filling up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ. For Christ's sufferings are not over. So long as there is one sheep lost on the mountains far away, the heart of the tender Shepherd grieves over its wanderings, and will grieve, until he finds it and brings it back. And the saints of God will know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and will share in his efforts to save the lost. As only a suffering Christ could reflect the Father, so only a suffering Christian can reflect Christ. Here is one reason for affliction—it opens our hearts to perceive the sorrow and the sin of the world, in order that we may comfort others with the comfort with which we ourselves have been comforted by God. "Think it not strange then concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." May I not urge this suffering of God on account of sin as a motive to prompt every one of us to flee from sin? God feels my sin, my neglects, my unbelief, my lovelessness, my indifference, and it grieves him at his heart. He has felt every one of our transgressions as a blow. And yet his love has followed us, and he desires our return. His suffering is the suffering of wounded love, as well as the suffering of violated holiness. "How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim!" is the expression of his sorrows, as he thinks of the possible end. Forbear, my friend, to grieve God longer. Come out from isolation, and join yourself to him who loves you. Give up the narrow and unworthy life of selfishness, and enter into the large sympathy of the heavenly Father. Be willing to share the sorrows of the Redeemer, and so to connect yourself with his great plan of saving men and of establishing the kingdom of God. So shall you have the highest joy this world can give! and, when affliction comes, you shall know that in all your affliction he is afflicted, and that the angel of his presence saves you.

For the only real blessedness of mortal man is to share in the blessedness of God, the blessedness that is consistent with, and that triumphs over, suffering.

O Love, that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O Light, that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy, that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross, that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be

XLIII

UNCONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN[1]

Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. (Ps. 19:12.)

The doctrine of the text is clearly this, that no man fully comprehends the nature or extent of his own sinfulness. The words are all the more impressive because they do not present the truth in the form of an abstract dogmatic statement, but as the testimony of personal experience. Indeed, we may say that we never really believe God's teachings with regard to the depth and enormity of sin until we feel that they are true with regard to our own sins; we never believe the doctrine of human depravity until we feel our own personal depravity. Nor can we by any force of argument convince others of their sins and their need of Christ, unless at the same time we see our own sins and our own need of Christ. It was this humble consciousness of his own sinfulness that gave such power to the preaching of Robert McCheyne, that young Scottish divine whom God took to himself in the fulness of his youth and promise. With incomparable modesty he said one day: "The reason, I think, why so many of the worst sinners of Dundee come to hear me is that they discover so much likeness between their hearts and mine." And this is the secret of the psalmist's power over us; this is the reason why we can hear from his lips such sad descriptions of human nature and yet, instead of cherishing an instinctive feeling of repulsion toward them, can yield our assent and make our penitent confession of their truth. The Nineteenth Psalm, which was read as the lesson of the morning, is a record of David's own experience, and the text is the very climax of the psalm. David has been speaking of the law of God—all-comprehending as the firmament, searching as the light, bright and glorious as the noonday sun. Some rays streaming from that holy law have shone down into the dark cavern of his soul; but those rays only reveal the contrast between himself and the God of light; only discover to him great regions of darkness which he had not before suspected and which stretch away illimitably in every direction around him. How deep, how wide those unexplored abysses of evil are, he cannot tell; overwhelmed with astonishment and grief he can only cry, "Who can understand his errors?" and then, conscious of his own utter helplessness without God, he prays: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," from that sin within me, whose depths are still unfathomed and unknown. And when in another psalm he expresses his confidence in God's sanctifying power and grace, the words are: "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom."

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[1] A sermon preached in Sage Chapel, Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., October 3, 1886.

This experience is not peculiar to David, but finds its parallel in every Christian heart and life. Nothing is more common than the confession on the part of eminently holy men, that every day of their lives gives them some new understanding of the sinfulness of their own hearts; that the guilt which once seemed slight and easily covered now rises before them in such mountainous proportions that nothing but infinite power and infinite love can remove it. These confessions of sin recur continually in the hymnology of the church and constitute no small part even of the sacred word. Is it not one of the greatest of wonders, while the holiest men esteem themselves so great sinners, while progress in goodness is marked most clearly by an increasing knowledge and abhorrence of personal sin—is it not, I say, one of the greatest of wonders that those who make no pretensions to religion, and have no aspirations after holiness, are scarcely conscious that they are sinners at all, and the greatest transgressors are least troubled by the accusations of conscience? You have seen men who never recognized the existence of their Maker, even by the poor forms of thanks and prayer, men whose lives were wholly selfish and sensual, and yet you have heard such men declare that as for sin, they were aware of no special sin which they committed—in fact, they scarcely knew what sin was. I suppose no one would deny that it is the general tendency among worldly men to deny or excuse the fact of sin, to conceal it or ignore it or wholly forget it. And yet no candid observer would say that as a general fact the church contains the sinners and the world embraces the truly holy. We may well ask, then, why men are so fearfully unconscious of their sins. My object is to mention some of the reasons for this surprising unconsciousness of sin.

I. The first of these reasons is this: THE POWER OF ANY PRINCIPLE WITHIN US CAN NEVER BE ESTIMATED UNTIL WE TRY TO OPPOSE AND RESIST IT. An illustration of this truth is offered by a late report to the French Academy. A member of that body of savants, reflecting one day upon the unseen and noiseless ascent of the sap through the capillary tubes of a great oak tree, bethought him of a device by which he might measure the force exerted in propelling the subtle fluid to the remotest leaves and twigs. Cutting off a small limb he applied an ingenious meter to the stump of it, and found to his amazement that the sap was impelled upward through that single limb with a force of many scores of pounds. It became easy to calculate how great was the aggregate of force exerted throughout the tree; then it was found that the weight of many tons would not prevent the rising of the sap. While the current flowed freely, no one could have a due conception of its power, but when the meter began to stop its flow, then its strength became manifest.

Just so, no one can estimate the power of sin within him until he tries to curb its risings; then he finds that no force he can apply will keep it down. The great balance-wheel of the steam-engine that moves all the machinery of a great manufactory revolves so steadily and quietly that a child's hand might almost seem strong enough to stop it; but make the attempt, and you are crushed in an instant. So there is in every heart a great central love of self that moves all the machinery of life. It seems easy to stop it and reverse its action until you have made the experiment; then you find every effort vain. You never can compute the force of gravitation until you try to lift yourself from the earth. So we never know how sin draws us down, until we seek to break this attraction that binds us to earth, and to raise our minds to the pursuit of things heavenly and divine.

Many a man thinks to stop the course of sin by setting up obstacles to its progress in the shape of good habits and partial reformations; but, like boys who build a miniature milldam across a country brook, only to find next morning that every vestige of the frail structure has been swept away by the rising stream, or that the current has made its way around the dam and left it high and dry. So he finds that good habits can only at the best check the flowing of sin in certain directions, while often they force it to break forth more impetuously in others. The man who really tries to resist *all* sin, finds himself, unless God helps him, like an oarsman in the rapids of Niagara. He may row vigorously for a while, but the mighty sweep of the current is too much for him at last. You may never yet have tried to conquer all evil within you, but can you not estimate the strength of that inward principle by your experience of the difficulty of conquering some single temptation or breaking some single evil habit? And have you not felt at such times that the weight of a conflict with all the wrong tendencies of your nature combined would be like Cain's, a burden greater than you could bear?

All these illustrations I have taken from the natural world. But there are others which come nearer to our moral nature. Sickness is the emblem of sin. The man who keeps about his business while a deep-seated disease is beginning its ravages, knows little of the weakness of his constitution until he is compelled to take to his bed and summon every energy and every appliance of medical skill to resist the invader. The drunkard thinks he is master of his appetite, and can stop his drinking at any time. Even when he is shattered in every nerve he still clings to the belief that the habit is not inveterate, that a change of scene or change of companions will enable him to subdue it; but when he once wakes to his danger and begins the fight, he finds that there is a tyrant within him; his will has turned traitor; a hand-to-hand combat with Satan is before him. And many a man persuades himself that he can give up his sins easily at any time, but when he makes the attempt he finds that his fancied strength is utter weakness; there is an evil demon within him who fights every inch of ground and uses every weapon of satanic art. He cannot wage such an eternal battle; rather than endure the long struggle, he resolves to turn back and go to hell with his eyes open! Ah, we know little of our own natures; this being of ours, so fearfully and wonderfully made, has become the home and hiding-place of sin. Rebellion against God has set up its throne there, and we never know the power of a rebellion until we try to put it down!

II. Another reason for men's unconsciousness of their sins may be found in the fact that CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE NEVER YET BEEN SUCH AS TO DEVELOP SIN IN ITS MOST STARTLING FORMS; in other words, God's providence has thus far prevented that quick and awful progress in sin which is its natural tendency. Anger does not always lead to murder, though the spirit of murder is there. Covetousness does not always lead to robbery, nor selfishness to miserliness or tyranny, nor love for the luxuries of life to voluptuous self-indulgence; yet the spirit of each one of these crimes is in the passion that hides itself in the heart. And this hidden passion would inevitably express itself in the outward act were the restraints of God's providence removed. The nature of the desire is not altered by the lack of opportunity for its gratification. Opportunity and the absence of restraint will transform many a fair-spoken, virtuous-looking man into a sensualist or a robber, as the early settlers of California can witness. And while these restraints are around us, no one of us can certainly tell the power of the evil within us. The very bars which God has set up to confine sin within bounds cause us to forget it. The love of reputation restrains many a man who is just upon the brink of criminal indulgence. The fear of punishment keeps the knife in many a scabbard when hatred prompts to murder. A quick conscience instructed early amid the influences of a Christian home makes many an unconverted man honorable in all his dealings, except with God. There is a womanliness of feeling, that by instinct as it were, discerns and repels temptation, and naturally prompts kind words and conduct to all, except Christ. Apart from these restraining influences without and within, sin would develop so quickly and frightfully that the soul would soon be beyond the reach of mercy. And yet, instead of regarding these restraints as gracious preventives established by God, men congratulate themselves that what they do or abstain from doing with these motives is evidence of an inward goodness with which God must be pleased; whereas it would be far more proper to look upon these restraints as evidences of an inward tendency needing regulation and repression.

As you walk through the long corridors of an insane asylum, the attending physician points you to a woman's face pressed against the bars of an iron door. There she is imprisoned, as fair and quiet a face as you often see. She calls out: "Doctor, surely I am well enough now to be given my liberty; see how calm I am." You are almost inclined to take up her cause as your own; but, gazing more closely through the bars, you see in the unsteady glance and the intense flashing of the eye gleams of the lunacy within, which would use liberty only as an opportunity to tear and destroy. No thanks to her that she is calm and quiet. The madness is there, but the *bars* prevent its manifestation. And so it is with sin,—the anger, pride, malice, selfishness, deceit of our hearts are checked in their manifestations by the influences of society and of early habit. Therefore we do not estimate them in their true light. The traveler in the White Mountains remarks that the valley at the foot of Mount Washington is strewn with enormous boulders of granite, which have been loosened from year to year from the great overhanging cliff, and carrying destruction in their course, have tumbled to the very spot where they now lie. If you inquire what force has separated these immense masses from the parent rock you find that behind the green fringe of foliage which waves so luxuriantly in summer, and hidden in the crevices of the mountain, are pools of water which the winter frosts change to ice. Expanding as they freeze, these little pools of limpid water have power to tear the solid rock asunder, and hurl its gigantic fragments down the mountainside. So there are destructive powers lurking in the soul—powers which are latent during the short summer of life, but which are competent when all restraint upon them is removed, to make the fairest seeming nature a shattered wreck. The real destructive power of sin is in great part hidden now, but it will be *felt* when the sunshine of God's grace comes to an end, and eternal winter settles down upon the soul.

III. A third reason for this strange unconsciousness of sin is that GOD'S JUDGMENT OF SIN IS NOT YET MADE MANIFEST. Sin takes the opinion of the world as its guide, not the opinion of God. We may say that it is a necessity of God's moral government that men should be allowed the world's standard instead of God's, if that be their choice. God cannot stand over us continually with the rod to *drive* us to obedience. The parent who would make his boy manly, and furnish room for the best development of character, must give his command and counsel, and then leave obedience to the boy's free will. So God will not make machines of us, but free moral agents. He leaves us to the influence of his commands, to the declaration of his invisible presence, to the assurance of a final day of account. But this very fact that God does not hold his law forever before our eyes, and thrust his presence upon us, and manifest at once his judgment upon our acts, is perverted by men into a proof that there *is* no God, no law, and no judgment. And when God is put out of sight, men easily take the world's standard for their guide. Pride and anger are called high-spirited. Insincerity takes the name of tact. Swindling is called sharpness. And as soon as public opinion sanctions, the voice of conscience is almost hushed.

It is surprising to read the records of history upon this point. At the time of the first revolution in France nine-tenths of the members of the National Assembly, comprising the collective wealth, intellect, and even virtue of the kingdom, were living in open and shameless adultery. Crimes, at the mere mention of which we shudder, were common and reputable in ancient Rome. The leading out of aged and infirm parents by their children, to die of hunger and desertion by the banks of the Ganges, violated no rule of propriety in India. And there have been towns in America where the morality of business was so low that an ingenious swindle was only laughed at and applauded as a piece of sharp practice. When men forget God and his law they can regulate their conduct by a factitious standard and so hide from themselves the enormity of their sin. We estimate our conduct toward God by some such standard. The rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the disregard of all his claims upon the soul is judged by such a standard. Because men generally do not think it so great a crime, we can look upon it as venial and excusable. But if we could take that sin up into the light of heaven and the presence of the angels and examine it there we should find it wicked and cruel and atrocious beyond all thought to conceive or words to express, and our very willingness to ignore the statute book and take the world's opinion as more credible than the testimony of God's word, is itself the most heinous of crimes.

That this absence of God's visible presence and this delay in executing judgment are made the means of hiding sin from ourselves is clearly set forth in the Bible. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily," says Solomon, "therefore the hearts of men are fully set in them to do evil." And men instinctively acknowledge this in the sudden fears which possess them when they think of coming into the presence of the lawgiver. As the boy's profanity ceases so soon as he sees his mother's face, as the fallen woman can keep good heart and countenance until the sin is discovered, but then sinks under the heavy blows of conscience, as the forger keeps on his smooth and self-complacent look until the detective enters his office and taps him on the shoulder, as the murderer holds on in his mock bravery until the dread paraphernalia of the gallows bursts upon his sight, so the sinner can maintain a certain quiet and indifference until he is brought face to face with God's law and God's judgment; then human standards vanish into nothingness and God's standard brings to light the long-hidden evil of the heart. You may possibly forget your sins for a time by persuading yourself that you will be judged by the world's standard. You may cover your sins with the veil of human opinion; you may think the record of them writ in water so that it never can be read again; but you will be judged by God's standard, not man's; the veil of human opinion will fall away at last, and your soul will stand naked before the Judge; the record you thought written in water will be found written in invisible ink instead, so that every word and letter of it will come out clear and distinct and dark in the fires of God's judgment. You may not feel your sins now, but *then* you will feel yourself all vileness and pollution; you may feel untroubled now, but *then* you will call on the rocks and mountains to fall upon you and hide you from the face of God and of the Lamb!

IV. But beyond all this, and as the last reason I shall mention why men are so fearfully unconscious of their sins, let me say that SIN ITSELF HAS A BLINDING INFLUENCE UPON THE MIND. Evil seldom presents itself to us in its own hideous nature; when it seeks to tempt us, it comes as an angel of light; it always furnishes us with abundant excuses for admitting it to our hearts; otherwise it could have no power to lead us captive. To be "blinded by passion" has passed into a proverbial phrase. One evil habit will often completely destroy one's power of sober judgment with regard to all things relating to the cherished sin. The opium-eater will persist in believing that his life is bound up with the use of the bitter drug, when everybody else sees clearly that the only chance of life for that wasted and shattered form is in the total abandonment of the destroying habit at any cost of pain and suffering. The man bent on murder is never more thoroughly foolish than when contriving ways to conceal his crime. His sin so blinds him that in covering his bloody tracks he weaves the very web of his own detection. And the reason is that the set purpose of the heart controls the attention. Passion will not permit the calm consideration of the difficulties and dangers that lie in its way. Sin will never look into the mirror of God's law to discover its own deformity. It does not think of God's nature and requirements, the certainty of his promises of wrath, the futility of all earthly judgments when they contradict his judgments. The sinner will not look at the numberless transgressions of his life, his unlikeness to God, his rejection of Christ, but he persists in fixing his thoughts on the seemingly good things in his character. Like Eve in the garden, he chooses to forget God's word: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," and to listen instead to Satan's whisper: "Thou shalt *not* surely die." By controlling his attention, sin leads the man to believe the enemy of his soul and to make God a liar.

This unbelief becomes a fixed habit of mind; but this is not all: every new sin adds to the inveteracy and strength of the habit. While his sins increase at an alarming rate, his blindness and unconcern increase in exact ratio with his sins. You can see this in the callousness of hardened criminals. The boy who once shuddered at obscenity learns to indulge in it without a qualm of conscience, and even to make merry over the days of his innocence. The soul loses its sensitiveness just in proportion as it is sunk in sin. There are wretches confined in our States' prisons whose souls are stained with every lust and crime upon the catalogue, but who have no apparent sense that they are sinners; aye, the most hoary-headed villain of them all may have knelt once by a mother's knee, and felt her hot tears falling upon his face as she brought the case of her little wayward son before her God in prayer. Those tears and sobs went to his heart once, and answering tears flowed freely from his eyes; but that day is long past; the tears will not flow now; he has broken away from every influence human and divine; and now he cannot feel—cannot even see his sin in breaking that mother's heart. Oh, how dreadful is this fact of human nature, that while the true Christian feels God's truth with regard to his own sins more and more, the unbeliever feels it less and less, until the time comes at last that the soul is "past feeling."

But we never know how terrible is this blinding power of sin until we see it overcoming and rejecting even the mighty witness of the Holy Spirit. When God's Spirit comes into the heart of the self-deceiver with his clear, divine testimony, even then sin can give the lie to God. The sinner fears the investigation, and will not allow it to proceed. You all remember the murder of Parkman by Doctor Webster some years ago in Boston. You all know how the honorable repute of the accused delayed every step that was taken, and how, after circumstances seemed to point distinctly to him as the murderer, a trembling and pallor came over those detectives as they turned the key of the laboratory door, behind which they knew they should find the sure evidences of his guilt. And when the Holy Spirit offers to show the sinner *his* guilt, he starts back too; he trembles, he will not see the truth; rather than see his sins as they are, he drives the Spirit from his soul. If he has a disease upon him, he wishes to know the worst of it; if he is in financial difficulty, he desires to see at once just where he stands; but when it comes to knowing what he is in the sight of God, sin persuades him to reverse all right rules, and to go on as if health and wealth were his, while he is utterly bankrupt, and spiritually diseased from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. As the condemned soldier is blindfolded before the fatal volley of musketry is fired, so sin blindfolds the sinner before his execution, that he may have no warning and no chance to escape his doom. Often, very often, he dies as the fool dieth, thinking all is well, until he wakes up in the other world to the fearful realities of the Judgment.

Three brief remarks conclude my theme. 1. The subject teaches us that *unconsciousness of our sins, instead of being a proof that our sin is small, proves the very opposite.* If it be true that this unconsciousness is caused by our failure to make any real effort to resist the tide of sin within us, if our ignorance is due to the fact that God in mercy has set up some bars to its desolating progress, if the delay of his judgments has been perverted into an evidence that our sin was so slight that he will not punish it, if we have allowed our sin to blind us to our true condition, then surely our unconsciousness of our sins is no excuse for them, but rather an aggravation. We could not be unconscious of our sins if we had not been bound to follow our own reason and will in the very teeth of God's warnings. The criminal who pleads intoxication as an excuse for crime is answered by the judge: "Who made you intoxicated but yourself? Do not extenuate one crime by pleading another." An infidel writer of England shows what the instinct of human nature teaches on this point, when even he declares that "the greatest of sins is to be conscious of none," and every one of us will do well to consider whether the absence of any feeling of our sins is not evidence that we are great and hardened transgressors.

Secondly, the very fact that a man does not feel his sins is not only proof that he is a great sinner in the sight of God, but *this lack of feeling is the most alarming possible symptom.* For there is no Christ and no salvation for such as he. Christ did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; he came to seek and save only those that are lost. For one who continues unconscious of sin there is absolutely no Saviour and no heaven. The guilty and repentant may be saved, but such, never! Your own unconsciousness of sin does not alter for a moment the awful fact that you are a sinner, so great a sinner that the weight of your sin when laid upon the Son of God crushed his soul in Gethsemane, and broke his heart on Calvary. Nor does it alter for one moment the fearful certainty that if you do not accept this work of Christ in your stead, the weight of it will come down upon you and crush you at the Judgment. We sometimes wonder when we see men under strong conviction, overwhelmed with the sense of sin, unable to conceal their agony. When I have seen this restless anguish of the soul before which God was unrolling the long scroll of its transgressions, it has seemed to me that a full view of that scroll, with no Saviour's blood to blot out its accusations, must be death and torment—yes, eternal death and eternal torment! And yet the thought that we do not feel our sins sometimes seems to me more fearful still. More dreadful, if possible, than the strongest conviction of our sins is this deathlike unconsciousness of them; for *that* may indicate the working of the enlightening Spirit of God, while *this* may indicate that the Spirit of God has left the soul to go on in all its blindness and unconcern until the day of wrath shall tear away the mask of self-deception, and the lightnings of God's justice shall destroy it suddenly and without remedy.

Last of all, this subject teaches us as no other can, *the immeasurable grace of God in the gift of his Holy Spirit.* Infinitely needy and vile as we are, the worst feature of our case is that we do not realize our need and vileness; and not seeing it we will not make the first effort for our own salvation. Laden with a mountain-weight of guilt, tottering on the verge of everlasting fire, and yet insanely happy! What infinite love of God, that not only provides a free salvation through the cross and the blood of his only Son, but also reveals to the rejecters and mockers of that salvation their danger and their deliverance, through the enlightening, convincing, renewing power of his Holy Spirit! Have you ever availed yourself of the offer of that Spirit to reveal you to yourself? Have you ever gone to God pleading his promise to give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him? If you have not, then you are doubly guilty; first, for your criminal ignorance of your condition, and then for your neglect of that divine Agent, who alone can show you what you are. You bear the responsibility not only of your sin, but of refusing light with regard to your sin. And what excuse will you render in the great day when you give up your account to God? Excuse? You have *no* excuse, for you first deny God's testimony, and then cast out from your heart the only witness who can ever convince you. But I hear some sinner say: " I do have some faint knowledge—oh, how faint!—of my condition as a sinner!" O friend, cherish that conviction, banish it not! It is the Spirit's work—the only work which Satan cannot counterfeit. God has not left you yet. He shows you your need, only that he may point you to Christ. " Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!" " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!"

The Spirit calls to-day,
Yield to his power;
Oh, grieve him not away,
'Tis mercy's hour!

XLIV

THE HELP OF THE SPIRIT IN PRAYER[1]

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. (Rom. 8:26, 27.)

The seventh chapter of Romans is the old story of the conflict between sinful human nature and divine grace; a conflict which begins with the moment of first conviction, and continues through the experience of conversion, to that point in the Christian life when there comes to the soul the glorious assurance of complete victory in Christ. The eighth chapter is the story of a long triumphant progress in the case of those with whom the divided life has ceased through conscious union with Christ and participation in his Spirit. As in the seventh chapter, we get a view of the earthward side of Christian character, so in the eighth, the heavenward side is described to us. The one presents religion in its relations to law; the other in its relations to the life-giving power of God; the one is full of the burden and sorrow of a struggling conscience and a will only half subdued, the other is full of the gratulations and rejoicings of the heart in which the power of sin is broken by the greater power of the indwelling Christ, and to which faith makes the present glorious though incomplete deliverance the evidence and pledge of the final and perfect redemption.

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[1] A sermon preached in the First Baptist Church, Rochester, N. Y., January 4, 1874.

Thus in the heart of the experienced Christian there is glory already begun, since he has in his present possession the earnest of his great future possessions. There is a burden indeed still existing in the condition of his own yet unsanctified soul, and in the condition of those who are yet in their sins around him. The creation of God, groaning under its load of sin and suffering, finds in him a ready sympathizer, and its longings for full deliverance are answered by the sighing of his own nature for the manifestation of the sons of God in their true character and glory. But this burden is very unlike the burden of unsubdued sin and crushing guilt that once weighed him down. That brought fear with it, and unrest and misery. But this burden is a burden of love; it is perfectly consistent with inward peace; it is one of the clearest marks of union with Christ. In it we enter into his work of desire and prayer for the bringing back of all things to himself. And in bearing this burden three mighty encouragements are given us: First, we have the certainty of Christ's triumph and of our triumph with him to cheer us in our patient waiting; secondly, we have the assurance that the Spirit of God helps us in our longings and prayers; and thirdly, we have the declaration that all things in the universe work together according to God's plan for our good here and for our salvation hereafter.

Having thus given a brief account of the connection in which the text occurs, we confine our attention to the passage before us. The great teaching of it is that in carrying on our struggle with the sinful propensities that yet remain within us, and in bearing the burden of anxiety and prayer for the salvation of others, we are not alone, because the almighty Spirit of God is present with us, inspiring us with these strong desires and helping us in our prayers. As another has said: "That same universal Spirit which fills the creation with yearnings for the eternal Magnet, yearns also in the hearts of believers and secures help for them." "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities," takes part with us in our weakness, bears, as it were, a share of our burden, and by prompting and counseling our petitions, acts as our mighty advocate in prayer. This wonderful blessing, the privilege and possession of all saints, though they may be only imperfectly conscious of it, deserves our most earnest consideration. Let me speak then on *the help of the Holy Spirit in prayer—first, the need of it, and secondly, the manner of it.*

I. A very slight attention to the nature of true prayer will convince us, I think, of our entire dependence on the Spirit of God for success in our supplication. By true prayer I mean prayer for right things, prompted by a right motive, offered in a right manner, and so accepted and answered by God. Such prayer is efficacious, not because it changes God's mind or bends God's will to ours, but because it furnishes the indispensable condition with which God has connected the gift of heavenly blessings. Certain methods of his working are revealed to us. God is an unchanging being, and what he purposes to do to-day he has purposed from all eternity. "He is of one mind, and who can turn him?" Yet still it is true that the blessings he bestows he has determined to bestow in a certain way. The end shall not be granted except through the use of means. God has determined that the farmer's field shall produce a crop the coming season, but he has also determined that the crop shall be the immediate result of the farmer's voluntary labor in sowing and reaping. The means are ordained as well as the end, and are ordained as necessary to the end, so that it is still true that if the farmer does not sow he shall have no crop. It would be foolish for the farmer to withhold his hand from labor because God has determined the result, for God has determined the result only in connection with the labor. It would be foolish for the farmer to idle away the precious springtime on the plea that God's purpose is fixed, and it is useless to attempt to change it. God's purpose is fixed whether there shall be a harvest or not on that particular field, but it is just *as* fixed that if there is to be a harvest, it must be preceded by hard work on the part of the farmer. So God has determined what heavenly blessings he will bestow upon men, but he has determined also that every gift of heavenly blessing shall be preceded by prayer. The means are also appointed in connection with the end, and he who would receive the blessing from the Lord must ask it in earnest faith and true submission to God's will. So that a proper conception of prayer not only makes room for the accomplishment through it of the unchangeable purposes of God, but also embraces the truth that God bestows gifts in answer to prayer which he never would bestow without it.

If this is a true view of the nature of prayer, it follows that only that prayer which is according to the will of God is answered. To teach his creatures their dependence and his sovereignty, he makes the gifts of his grace turn upon the humble reverential petitions of those who love him. He will have their hearts in unison with himself and his great work before he answers their prayers. All the petitions of all the church are only echoes of that one: "Thy will be done." True prayer is not so much a bringing God down to sympathy with us as it is a bringing us up to sympathy with God. There can be no change in God, but there may be change in us that fits us to receive his gifts. His purpose does not permit him to bestow those gifts until we come to him with a heart that longs for the accomplishment of his will in all things, and so is in harmony with the great central power and motive of the universe.

True prayer asks for particular blessings only *so far* as they may be in accord with the will of God; it presses its suit *because* it feels that God's glory is involved in its receiving an answer. True prayer flings itself into the great current of God's providential means, that it may reach the end which he has foreseen and ordained from the beginning. And here is the great encouragement to pray,—God has appointed our prayers as the means of our own and others' salvation, and so of his glory. He has determined from eternity that every prayer of faith and submission shall be infallibly followed by the putting forth of his power.

He has included this in his eternal purpose, that every soul in harmony with himself shall have power to wake into actual efficiency the silent and yet unexecuted resolves of his heart, just as when two harp-strings are keyed to the same note, the striking of the one brings forth responsive music from the other.

Thus a slight consideration of the nature of true prayer opens to us the sight of our great needs in prayer. If there is no true prayer which has not God's will as its supreme aim, and sympathy with God as its great inner motive, how can sinners ever pray without God's help? We cannot fail to see the propriety of these conditions of success in prayer, but how can creatures whom selfishness still torments, whom unbelief still leads astray, whom sin still blinds, ever fulfil these conditions, and come before the great God with hearts lifted above all petty selfish interests and absorbed in desire for the divine glory? And how can we know the proper manner of approach, recognizing with our souls the presence and majesty of God, acknowledging from our hearts our utter destitution of any claim upon his compassion, yet combining with this a childlike confidence in the infinite freeness and condescension of his grace? What remedy for our ignorance when petitions are suggested which may not be according to the will of God, but on the other hand, may be only the offspring of an unworthy desire for our own comfort or ease or pleasure? Ah, no one who has ever felt the solemnity of an audience with the King of kings has been free from such questions as these. How can God hear or answer a sinner's prayer? Job felt this ignorance when he cried: "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!"

The heathen philosophers made this ignorance a reason why a mortal should never attempt to address the gods in prayer, and so the sorrows and anxieties and dreadful fears and intolerable longings of the heart were sealed up in deathlike silence, only to burn the heart to ashes by their intense inward fires. Thank God that we live in better and brighter days; that a revelation is given us which makes prayer a rational and satisfying resource. While "nothing human holds good before God, and nothing but God himself can satisfy God," still it is possible for man to pray and to pray aright. For this is the revelation: God does himself, by his Holy Spirit, help us to come into sympathy with his purposes and to ask according to his will. For the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and while we know not what to pray for as we ought, maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. So our need is supplied; the fulcrum for this great lever that moves the world is given us. God himself furnishes not only the answer, but the argument and inspiration of our prayers.

II. One other point remains to be examined: What is the manner of the Holy Spirit's intercession? It is interesting to observe that the same word which is used to describe the work of the Spirit is used in the Epistle to the Hebrews to describe the work of Christ. Christ is there represented as able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Here we have presented to us the idea of an eternal Advocate *at the right of the throne,* whose requests secure for us on earth the gifts for which we truly pray. So the Spirit is presented to us as an advocate *in the soul,* helping us to fulfil the conditions of successful prayer. And this the Spirit does, not by acting as a mediator outside of us—that would be to take the place of Christ; nor, on the other hand, by superseding the use of our faculties—that would be to take *our* place; but as the text expresses it, by helping us in our ignorance and weakness, by lovingly and pityingly prompting and counseling our petitions, and thus teaching *us* how to pray.

Some of us can remember days of childhood which were overcast by some great sorrow or darkened by the first deep consciousness of sin; and in those days, hours when a mother's tender hand led our childish steps apart and a mother's tender voice taught our childish lips to utter the words of confession and submission. If you can remember such a scene, I am sure no memory of your childhood can be more sweet than that of the sobbing, broken utterances in which one who is sainted now showed you how to find relief in presence of the heavenly Father. It is an illustration of the Spirit's work of intercession—but oh, how imperfect an illustration! The mother's teaching is external, the Spirit's is within the soul; the mother's may have little power to lead us out of ourselves and up to God, the Spirit's power can lift us up very near the throne; the mother can only whisper *words* in our childish ear, the Spirit can inspire the heart with pure and true desires toward God. Yet in *this* their work is similar—both are helpers to the action of our own minds; neither comes between our souls and God, but rather helps us in our weakness to come *ourselves* with due sense of our unworthiness and a comforting trust in the promises of God. The Spirit, more easily and naturally and powerfully than any mother's voice, can teach the child of God both what he should pray for and how to seek it as he ought.

But more than this: prayer does not consist in words alone, but in "the heart's sincere desire, unuttered or expressed." And here is a mysterious influence of the Spirit which differences it from all human helps and lifts it far above them. The Spirit helps the Christian not simply by suggesting to him intelligently worded petitions, but ofttimes by exciting in him desires too vast and eager for him to grasp or express except in sighings. There are sacred hours of the soul, in which we enter the presence-chamber of the Most High and gain some view of the infinite beauty of holiness, the infinite sacrifice of Christ, the infinite value of the soul, the infinite sorrow of banishment from God; and then we long, with a mighty longing, that salvation might come from God to the lost and perishing. And in those deepest moments speech fails, yet the Spirit prays; like the prophets, who knew not what nor what manner of time the Spirit within them did signify, so we know not the full force nor meaning of our prayers; we know only that we are near to God and that we cry unto him to make himself known and to spread through all things his glory. There is joy, but it is a joy intermingled with sorrow,—joy in God, but sorrow for the world and for the souls for whom we pray. It is the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. And no experience of our lives is so rational as this. The Spirit of God carries us not beside ourselves, but above ourselves, upholding our human weakness along heights where we never could walk alone, leading us aright in the obscurity of our longing, and filling us with his own mighty desires for the rescue of souls and the redemption of the great sin-laden earth. Not a word may escape our lips, though our hearts may be full of sighings that cannot be uttered. Still it is prayer, the truest, deepest prayer; for the Holy Spirit has inspired and made intercession for us. Aye, the voice of that silent and unutterable longing has entered into the ear of God. He has understood it, though men may not and we may not. He has sent his Spirit into our hearts, and the prayer which has been inspired under his direction he will, in his own time and way, infallibly answer: "For he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to his will."

The practical value of this theme can scarcely be overestimated. It has relation to every part of our Christian life, to every prayer we utter. It teaches us:

1. The true test of real prayer. It is this: No prayer can be acceptable in the sight of God which has not the Holy Spirit for its inspirer. Much that is thought to be prayer is no prayer; many a "let us pray" is uttered where no true prayer follows. Other ends may be subserved by it, a useful habit may be

kept up, others may be benefited by our example; but God accepts it not. God can accept no prayer that is not offered in accordance with his will by a heart in sympathy with himself; and this harmony with God can come to a sinful soul only from the inworking and power of his Holy Spirit. But, on the other hand, many a petition which we are tempted to call no prayer at all is yet true prayer. Though expression may be lacking and the words may lag far behind the thought; yes, though the only exercise of the mind may be an indistinct and half-comprehended longing, and sighs may altogether take the place of words, yet if God and holiness and salvation are its object, be sure that it is the Spirit's work, and that he who hears and understands the young ravens when they cry, has heard and answered the cry of his child. What encouragement to pray is given us in this assurance to all saints that the Spirit helpeth their infirmities, and when they know not what to pray for as they ought, maketh intercession for them!

2. We are taught to value and improve those favorable moments when the Spirit inclines our hearts to pray. The Persian poet wrote:

> Sayest thou: "Come, Lord"? that means: "Come, child, to me,"
> And all thy glowing sighs God's message bring to thee.

When the heart trembles with dim desires for better and holier things in our own experience or for the redemption of others from sin, desires which we cannot describe or express, let us court and woo the Spirit, for his influences have inspired them; let us obey the impulse that leads us to prayer, for

When God inclines the heart to pray,
He hath an ear to hear.

Such desires are among the foremost indications that the Spirit is at work preparing the way for a coming of the Lord in grace and power. It is upon the *thirsty* ground that he pours out streams of water, and this anxious longing for the grace of God, this unuttered oppression of the heart in view of the situation of the ungodly, this impulse to renewed self-consecration, this desire that cannot be satisfied but by frequent turning aside to pray, this is God's own appointed sign that his Spirit is brooding, as in the beginning, upon the face of the dark and troubled waters and preparing for the utterance of the mighty creative words, "Let there be light!"

3. I know no better evidence of our adoption than this: That such desires are ours. They are the first-fruits of the Spirit and the earnest of our future inheritance. To be full of the Spirit of God, this is a foretaste of heaven. I do not envy the Christian who never knew this blessing, and has no consciousness that the Spirit has ever helped his infirmities and turned his weak supplications into the joy and strength of assured divine communion. I will not say that one who is destitute of any such experience is destitute of the grace of God, for I know not how low measures of piety Christ may see to be still real. I know that many a prayer uttered in unconsciousness of the Spirit's presence is yet inspired by him, for he is the source of every holy desire. But this too, I know, namely, that a conscious presence of the Holy Ghost—a conscious help of the Spirit in prayer—is the privilege of

the Christian, and if so, it must be his duty to live in possession of it. For to have the spirit of prayer is nothing more nor less than to have the Spirit of God within us, helping us in our intercessions, and this gift of the Spirit has been purchased for his church by the death of the Saviour. Every believer in Christ without exception may enjoy the rich blessing of that gift. The possession of it is not dependent on natural temper or intellectual culture or past worthiness of life. In spite of our weak wills and unstable hearts, we may have it; indeed, if these are our peculiar infirmities, we cannot do without it. Not to have the Spirit within us, which will give us enjoyment in God's service and power in prayer, after all this large provision for its supply, is an inexcusable neglect of God's greatest and most precious gift. Indeed, when we consider how greatly our usefulness is impaired by the lack of the Spirit in our hearts, and how great influence for God we might exert if we once possessed it, does not its attainment seem worth any effort or any sacrifice? Does not the continuance of merely formal prayers seem a great sin against God? Would to God that we might break over these bounds of selfishness which narrow down the wide scope of religion till it becomes altogether a matter of our own personal salvation. Would to God that a new baptism of the Spirit might give us such love for souls and desire for their salvation that we should bring them one by one and lay them at the feet of Jesus as they brought the paralytic of old, with the steadfast assurance the while that in answer to our prayers Jesus would pity and heal them.

4. I know there are many who desire to gain and to keep this spirit of prayer. But how to get it, that is their question. Resolve then, first of all, that with God's help you will put to the test his promise that more readily than earthly parents give good gifts to their children, God will give his Holy Spirit to those who ask him. Make this then the grand object of your thoughts and efforts and rest not till the blessing is yours. You may not gain the strong assurance of the Spirit's presence with you all at once. Sympathy with God and confidence in him are plants which are rooted only through many trials; and after the conscious presence of the Spirit is once gained, it may be easily lost by self-trust, vanity, neglect, transgression. You must not seek it as an experiment or as a gift to be enjoyed for a time, put to some special use, and then thrown away. No; if the Holy Spirit enters the soul, it is to abide there, and to reign supreme there. And before he gives himself to you, you must give yourself to him.

Come then, eternal Spirit, come
  From heaven, thy glorious dwelling-place;
Come make my sinful heart thy home,
  And consecrate it by thy grace.
My wants supply; my fears suppress;
  Direct my way and hold me up;
Teach me in times of deep distress
  To pray in faith and wait in hope.

5. It is wonderful that any door should be barred against the entrance of this sublime divine guest, yet there are many hearts that exclude him. Every one of us, whether saint or sinner, might have his inward

presence if we so willed it. Even now indeed in the reproof of conscience and half-inclination to yield our will to his we see the evidence of his willingness to come and dwell with us. This evidence would be stronger if we did not repress the desires which he excites within us. You may judge how great his desires are for men's salvation, by the intense longings and unutterable sighings with which he sometimes fills the hearts of Christians. There is great danger that you may so grieve him by your repeated refusals that he will never come to you again. How fearful a thing to provoke that Spirit who alone can inspire you to pray or others to pray for you, when you know that without prayer you can never be saved! Then let him into your heart to-day! When you go to your homes, kneel down and invite him to abide there. If you ask him sincerely he will not delay, but swifter than the wings of the wind, and as viewless too, he will come to help you in your prayer, and assure you of your own salvation. But stop not there. The gift of that Spirit makes you a spiritual priest to offer up spiritual sacrifice and intercession for others. As Aaron, when he went in to God, wore upon his breast the glittering breastplate of many-colored stones engraved with the names of the children of Israel, so do you bear upon your heart the name of this one and that one who is now a stranger to Christ, and by the help of the Spirit make daily intercession to God for them. So your life, being connected with the divine plans and ordered by the divine Spirit, shall not be a mere blank in the great record of the world, but shall bring honor to God and blessing to mankind.

XLV

THE CHRISTIAN'S RESOURCES [1]

My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4: 19.)

"My God,"—how much of experience and confidence there is in those words! God was not a far-off God to Paul. No more building altars "to the unknown god" as heathendom did, groping in its darkness and longing for light, or as modern skepticism does, giving up all search after God as vain, and glad on the whole that it is so! None of this in Paul, but the knowledge of God as one revealed, as one to whom he is bound by living ties of affection and daily intercourse; as one whom he can wholly trust! "My God,"—yes, there is more than experience and confidence in the words. There is the sense of possession and the immeasurable dignity and strength involved therein. It is the old cry of David when he was hunted by Saul and had no earthly wealth and no earthly helper, "O God, thou art my God!" No wealth? no helper? Ah, God was his, "the Lord was his inheritance." God was "the strength of his heart and his portion forever." So Paul could say that God was his, and with God all the open treasuries of God's grace and love. Wonderful blessing of the Christian that in the darkest hour he may say, "God is mine." Wonderful help in his efforts to bring others to God, that he can say to them as Paul did from the consciousness of his own great possessions in God and his knowledge of the infinite freeness of God's love: "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Paul could say this to the Philippians not conditionally, but as a matter of prophecy, since he knew that in all their weakness and persecution they too, like himself, had the living God for their God. So I feel to-day that I can bring this promise to you. You feel that you have many needs, needs which only God can supply. Yes, but "my God shall supply all *your* need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Let us reflect a little upon *the great need, the great supply,* and *the great method of this supply.*

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[1] A sermon preached in the Delaware Avenue Baptist Church, Buffalo, N. Y., November 12, 1893.

I. The great need—man has been called a bundle of needs. Providence seems to teach him this lesson by so ordering that at his first entrance into the world he shall be the most forlorn and helpless of all creatures. The young of the animal creation may live and thrive where the little wailing infant will only die. But we are not only dependent for *life.* All those things that make life desirable, loving companionship, moral training, the place and the instruments of labor, these we do not create ourselves; they are given us. We may call ourselves self-made men as much as we will; there is no such thing as a self-made man upon the planet. Take from any man what the past has given him, what men long in their graves have wrought out for him, of experience and example, of intellectual and moral influence, and there would be only a pitiable show left behind. Success in this world is not so much your work as it is God's gift. You can look back on many a companion of your younger days whose youth was quite as hopeful as yours, but who has been floating about as a waif upon the waters while your ship has come safely into port. Nothing impressed me more solemnly in my ride in Palestine along the Mediterranean shore than the many wrecks that strewed the sandy beach and stretched their white skeleton arms up into the balmy air. No name, no sign to tell whence they came or whither they were bound, when they went to pieces, or how many perished in the final catastrophe. They seemed to have sailed out of the distant past and to have left their bones as a warning for the future. There have been many wrecks of ships upon the sea—but oh, how many more of human lives! Are you safe and prosperous to-day? Thank God and pity those who are even now tossed upon the deep?

But these, after all, are the externals of human life; " the life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." Have you ever thought that life itself is not only an original, but in a sense a continuous gift of God? I do not mean that preservation is a continuous creation, as some have said; but I do mean that without the immanent life of God holding all other things in life, there could be no life for God's creatures or for any one of them. In him we live and move and have our being. God has established such things as second causes in his universe; matter has properties of its own and is not a dream, but a substantive existence; there are forces at work in matter and in mind. Yet none of these second causes, properties, forces, are independent of Him who made them. Only as he sustains their energies by the exercise of his living will can they exist or do their work. And so the life-current, that keeps flowing even while we sleep, would never flow except God fed the stream continually at its fountain. All our life is from God, both at the first and now. What have we that we have not received? Why nothing—absolutely nothing—nothing, that is, except our sins; those did not come from him, but from ourselves. And just as a needy man is needier still when sickness gets hold of him, so we are made the neediest of the needy by this disease of sin. It is a great thing to keep the tide of life flowing in the body. It is a greater thing to rescue us from the death of the soul. The dry stream in the depth of summer, with its hot stones reflecting the glare of the sun, its mill-dam broken down, and the mill dilapidated and in decay, this is only a faint picture of man's need of the streams of God's renewing and life-giving grace. Ah, it hardly illustrates it at all, for on this human heart of ours rests a load of guilt which only an infinite sacrifice can expiate; clinging to it is a pollution which nothing but the blood of God's only Son can ever wash away.

Then our needs do not cease when we are brought back to God. The greatest of them are satisfied, but we are more conscious of those that remain. We are able to lay our own personal needs, both the temporal and the spiritual, upon the bosom of infinite pity and love, and to feel secure that all things shall work together for our good. But it is more difficult when others are connected with us whose interests seem at times more important than our own. John Knox did not doubt his own salvation when he passed through that agony of prayer, "Lord, save Scotland or I die!" It was the burden of all the needs of Christ's church that rested upon him.

And there is this about such times of need that throws some light upon the purpose of them. They teach us how valuable are the interests for which we pray and how far any mere human power is from securing them. We learn how utterly dependent the church is upon God, and how impossible it is that God's kingdom should prosper without the constant presence and agency of God's providence and Spirit. The means of grace, the appointment of the ministry, the work of the pastorate, prayer for laborers in their raising up, their training, their actual service, present themselves in their true light as ordinances of divine wisdom. And then there are vows of new self-devotion made, and prayers of naked faith uttered, which God may see to be the prerequisites of success and blessing in the future. It was the prayers of the captivity that prepared the joy of Israel's return from exile. God grant that revelation of your needs may prepare the way for an abundant answer to your prayers from him who hears even before we speak and whose gifts exceed the largest faith of his children.

II. A few words, secondly, with regard to the great supply,—"My God shall supply all your need." Then, if God is the source of supply, we may be sure that will be supply worthy of a God, since God does nothing unworthy of himself. When God gives he gives liberally and without upbraiding. He might upbraid us for our sins, and for our abuse of gifts already bestowed; but no. There is no word said about those. He is the giving God, the God with whom giving is no episode in his being, but whose very nature it is to give. If Paul had stopped here it would have been a grand assurance. But there is more to come. He gives us the *measure* of this supply. "My God will supply all your need according to"—what? Your merits? No! the Christian would feel that these assured him nothing but condemnation before God? "According to" your customs? your human customs of giving? No! these are but the reflection of our only half-sincere and only half-liberal hearts; we can put no dependence upon the supply that finds its measure here. "According to" your expectations? No! for our unbelief comes in again and again to prevent our expecting anything from God; or if we expect anything, to prevent us from expecting anything great or valuable. Small gifts, small supplies—these are the things we deal in ourselves, and these only we expect from God. Thank God these are not the measure of *his* gifts. But the apostle says: "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The riches of his glory; this can mean nothing less than that transcendent abundance and fulness which characterizes the nature and the acts of God. God is called the God of glory, and glory is said to belong to him before suns or stars were made. It is well for us to remember that in virtue of this glory, no self-revelation ever exhausts God; there are reserves of power and grace in him, when the largest exhibition of them have been made to mortals. God's omnipotence is not an instinct like that which pantheism supposes, but an attribute which he exercises according to his will. He is by no means encompassed by the laws of nature or by the existing universe. "The heaven of heavens cannot contain him." We may look upon the mightiest works of his hands, and yet say: "Lo, these are parts of his ways: only a whisper is heard of him, but the thunder of his power who can understand?" In God is an inexhaustible fountain of new beginnings, new creations, new revelations. Greater than any threatenings is the transcendence of his wrath. Greater than any promises is the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that is in reserve for the righteous. And yet the riches of his glory—the infinity of his majesty and power—that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor hath entered into the heart of man, that which is greater than we can think or ask, in short, the unsearchable greatness of God, is declared to be the standard and measure of God's supply of his people's needs. Their needs in life, their needs in death, their needs in sickness, their needs in health, their needs in temptation, their needs in prayer, their needs in labor, their needs in rest, their needs in relation to his church on earth, their needs in the great world of spiritual worship above; all these shall be supplied according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

It is said of George Peabody that during his last visit to this country he was so overwhelmed with applications for pecuniary aid to this and that benevolent object, private and public, that one day, forgetting that these were but the incidents and responsibilities of wealth, he gathered together more than a thousand begging letters and, in a fit of anger, threw them into the fire. It was hardly to be wondered at; we all pardon him when we think of the millions he gave away. But when I heard it, it set me thinking of the millions of such applications that are made to God, hour by hour and year by year, all over the world, and of the infinite reason for rejoicing we had in the fact that these myriads of petitions do not disturb his constant and gracious heart nor limit his regard for any single suppliant, however humble. On the other hand, he measures his giving as he would have us do, by the greatness of his means, and though he is so infinite in power, he gives according to the riches of his glory. Try but this one promise of his and you shall find that as your need and your prayer expand God's heart is ever larger than your wants; God's willingness to give ever more perfect than your willingness to ask; and you shall find yourselves, in the reception and enjoyment of his abundant gifts, wondering that you ever doubted his word, wondering that you did not see that the height and breadth and length and depth of his love absolutely surpasses knowledge.

One word only, in the last place, upon the great method of this supply revealed to us in the text: "God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." This phrase "by Christ Jesus" will fail to make its proper impression upon us, unless we remember that in the original it is "in

Christ Jesus," and is one of those incessant repetitions of the thought that Jesus Christ is the only channel, so to speak, through which God's grace flows to men, and the only reservoir in which is gathered up God's life and power for human weal and salvation. This name of Christ may serve as a *pledge* that God will bestow his gifts in all their fulness upon us. None of his after-gifts are so wonderful and precious as the first gift of his Son. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?" When you buy the watch the case is thrown in; you pay nothing additional for that. No merchant adds to the bill for the paper and twine that wrap it up. So, since God has given us Christ, all other blessings are but as wrappings and incidentals compared with him. We may expect them of him who so loved us as to give his only-begotten Son.

And then the phrase implies the everlasting *condition* of God's giving and of our reception also. We must be in Christ in order to receive, in communion and living fellowship with the Saviour. Not to the worldly and skeptical is this promise given that all their needs shall be supplied, but only to those who, feeling their need as sinners, have believed in Jesus Christ and have entered into spiritual union with him. For all who have done this, for all who can say, "I am in Christ"; "Christ is my personal Saviour"; "I live a life of faith in the Son of God"; this promise is applicable. Having sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these needed things shall be added unto you. "For your heavenly

Father knoweth that ye have need of these things"; you have but to ask and you shall receive, not according to the narrowness of human giving, but according to the riches of God's glory in Christ Jesus.

Yes, brethren, since you are joined to the Lord Jesus Christ, renewed by his Spirit, and kept thus far by his power, this promise is given to you: "God will supply all your need according to his riches in glory." You are in Christ, and your needs are far more manifest to God and far more near to his heart than they can be to you. He may try your faith by delay, but it will be but to make that faith the stronger and prepare you for a greater blessing. Honor God then by your sense of need, by your dependence not upon the arm of man, but upon him. Call upon him with the confidence that he will grant you precisely what you need. Expect that praying breath shall not be spent in vain, and just so sure as God lives, his word will be fulfilled, and in the fulness of his blessing you shall say: "This is our God, we have waited for him."

And you too, dear friends, who have yet no shelter in Christ, and no supply for the deepest, greatest needs of your nature, I pray you to enter into this fellowship of the Son of God also, that with us you may find in God an everlasting portion and possession.

XLVI

THAT WHICH IS PAST[1]

And God requireth that which is past. (Eccl. 3:15.)

There are certain days in our lives which seem especially designed as days of sober reflection upon the brevity of life and the destiny of the soul beyond the grave. The Sabbath might always be such a day if we would rightly use it, but the frequency of its return too often blunts our sense of its importance and makes it like all other days. Then there are birthdays, when the thought comes over us like a flood that we are getting onward, onward in life's journey, and that soon at the best, life's journey for us must end. There are anniversary days too, in many a household, which bring a deeper sadness with them because they revive the memory of some desolating sorrow; days which stand like tombstones here and there along the green path of life; days whose solemn spiritual influence we cannot, we would not resist, because they draw us nearer to heaven and to the sainted spirits of the departed who worship there. Yet there is another day which seems to me even more clearly intended in God's providence to rouse us from our careless dreaming, to arrest us in our absorbing chase after the nothings of time, and to bring us face to face with the realities of eternity. Such a day is just about to close; it is the last Sabbath of the vanishing year. Many of you will recollect the strange air of authority with which the ancient mariner in Coleridge's poem stops the wedding guest as he is hastening to the marriage feast. No opposition or remonstrance can withstand the power of his long gray beard and glittering eye or prevent the old seafaring man from recounting his unearthly tale:

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[1] A sermon preached in the First Baptist Church, Cleveland, Ohio, on the last Sunday evening of the year.

> He holds him with his glittering eye—
>   The wedding guest stood still,
> And listens like a three-years' child:
>   The mariner has his will.

So the gaunt form of the dying year crosses the track of each one of us to-night and demands a word with us. We cannot help recognizing his claim upon us for a sober hearing; if we try to escape from his admonitions, they will ring in our ears even while we fly. It is only reasonable that we should stop and listen. We should be less than men if we did not have some sense of the solemnities of these few closing hours of the year. Consider at what a point of time we stand! Before this present week shall close the record of another year will be finally made up for each of us, with all its good deeds if any such there are, with all its neglects and sins also written there, the book will be shut and sealed; not a page can be rewritten or obliterated, not a line or a word can be added to that record or subtracted therefrom; just as it is when the year shall close it shall be opened by the Judge and read before the assembled universe at the last great day. For " God requireth that which is past."

I do not wonder that some churches have felt so deeply the impressive solemnity of these last hours of the year that they have spent them in watching and prayer, in humble confession of sin and imploring of the divine favor. We do not need to follow that precise custom, it may degenerate indeed into mere superstition; but we do need the spirit which led to its institution; we do need to remember that for every idle word that we have spoken, for every unholy thought, for every act unprompted by love to God, we must give account in the day of Judgment. I know there are some who cannot understand this rigid accountability. They think it gives a dismal aspect to life. To them the only wisdom is to cry with the poet, " Let the dead past bury its dead," and then push on to new pursuits and pleasures. But what if it should appear that " God requireth that which is past " not by arbitrary decree, but in accordance with a law imbedded in human nature itself; what if the past be not dead but living, and full of power to convict and condemn; what if the sins of months and years gone by are by the very constitution of our souls bound to us, as a corpse was in old times bound to the body of a living criminal, bound to us so that we *cannot* cut ourselves loose from it; what if the past can never in any proper sense be blotted out for the sinner, but is and must be a part of him forever? This is the truth, I verily believe. God's requisitions are not arbitrary; they are founded in the nature of things; they are expressions of what must be so long as his nature is what it is. And since he has made us in his image, his laws are not arbitrary with respect to us; they find their justification in our human nature as well as in his own. The subject to which I call your attention then is this: *The evidences and preparations for the final judgment which appear in the very nature and constitution of man.*

The first of these evidences and preparations for the final judgment I find in the fact of memory. That is a wonderful faculty which reconstructs the past long after it has seemed buried forever, and builds up again the worn-out fabric of our former lives. The wild legends of the Middle Ages used to relate that Doctor Faustus the necromancer could summon into his presence the forms of the world's dead heroes and the queens who had ruled men by their beauty as well as by their wisdom. But this power, by which we summon into the chamber of memory not only the persons but the deeds of the past, is stranger than the fictitious tales of Doctor Faustus. It is not altogether voluntary. How many things men are compelled to remember which they would give worlds to forget! There are times when memory becomes a tyrant and a tormentor, and its victim cries to God like David, "Remember not the sins of my youth." Are there not some of us who can recall critical hours when the moral and spiritual fate of a child, a relative, a friend, hung trembling in the balance, and some neglect of duty on our part, some evil example set by us, some act of anger or some secret sin jostled the scale in the wrong direction, and we became the procurers and helpers in a development of evil character which has not ended yet, and whose ultimate results no eye but God's can foresee? Can parents ever forget such sins against their children? Can Christians ever forget such neglect of the souls whose destiny God seemed to put once in their hands? Can the depraved man who leads an innocent creature astray by his arts or his example ever forget the wrong he has done? Ah, these things burn into the soul and at times they give exquisite pain. Have you never stood by the coffin of one who had cared tenderly for you in early years, and while you gazed tearfully upon the pallid brow so calm and cold in death, had the thought of some bitter word you had once spoken or some undutiful act flashed across your mind and driven you almost distracted because no confession could ever be heard by those sealed ears, no word of kindness could ever pass those marble lips again to assure you that you were forgiven? Some years since the Philadelphia Lunatic Asylum held confined within its walls a young man of distinguished parentage, whose madness led him to stand for hours fixed and motionless as a statue. He was a son of the celebrated Doctor Rush. He had killed a man in a duel, and the memory of that fearful morning was too much for his sanity. There he would stand immovable till suddenly he would wake to recollection; he would pace off the distance and give the word, "Fire!" Then crying out, "He is dead! he is dead!" he would give way to an agony of grief and despair. Reason had almost fled, but the memory of one great sin remained to torment him. Would any price be too great for such a man to pay for some draught of the waters of Lethe which would enable him to forget the past? And yet no human art can compound such a draught; no man can blot out from memory the record of his sins. The sins which seem trivial when we judge them by the false standards of the world, can we be sure that they will not have frightful power to torment us when the things which divert our minds from them have passed away and memory brings them unceasingly before us? Is not the fact that we can never cut loose from these past sins or cover them with the mantle of forgetfulness, a manifest preparation for the Judgment?

I am not speaking now of some mere popular notion that is without reasonable foundation. Intellectual science renders it more than probable that we never do really forget anything, but that the soul preserves a secret record in memory of every thought and impression of our whole lifetime. As a late writer has said: "In the brain of man impressions of whatever he has seen and heard, nay, even the vestiges of his former thoughts are stored up. These traces are most vivid at first, but by degrees they decline in force, though they probably never completely die out. During our waking hours, while we are perpetually receiving new impressions from things that surround us, such vestiges are overpowered and cannot attract the attention of the mind; but in the period of sleep, when external influences cease, they emerge from oblivion and the mind groups them into the fantastic forms of dreams." Not only the phenomena of dreams, but other strange facts of mental history confirm the view of this writer. We all have experienced the marvelous return to our minds of facts and feelings which seemed to have utterly passed from our memories. Peculiar external circumstances, peculiar clearness of mental vision incite us to explore the past, and lo! persons and things, thoughts and deeds which have long been hidden, come to light again and march in solemn array before us; the burial-places of memory have given up their dead. We have all read the narratives of men who have been revived after suffering apparent death upon the gallows or by drowning, and we remember how their whole lives in their most minute details seemed in the dying struggle to pass before them like the scene of a panorama, and every little act of sin, however long forgotten, presented itself there with startling clearness and convicting power. These facts, with many others which might be cited, go to show that there is not only a recording angel in heaven, but one within us who inscribes every sin in indelible characters on the tablets of the mind. And what mighty preparation for the great final day is this constant taking down of testimony for the trial, which is going on within each soul before me, and within every soul of earth's countless populations! When the Judge shall sit upon the throne of his glory, it is written that "the books shall be opened." Have we ever reflected that those books may be the books of memory? It is no arbitrary decree that every idle word we have ever spoken shall be judged there, because the very constitution of our minds is such that not one such word can escape that final scrutiny; if God kept no account against us, we are so made that we cannot help keeping account against ourselves. The record is within us; there in memory we have the evidence that God will bring every forgotten thing into judgment.

I said, if God kept no account against us there would still be books of memory full of accusing records. But does not the very fact of memory in us show that God *does* keep account? When we cannot forget, is there a possibility of God's forgetting? God has made us in his image, and our consciousness of our own thoughts and deeds is but the shadow of God's. He knows all that we know; he knows even if we forget. The Egyptians symbolized his nature by the figure of an eye upon the top of a scepter, intimating that God was all eye to see and all power to judge the transgressor. He heard the words spoken by the king of Israel in the silence and secrecy of his bedchamber. He declares that he follows the sinner step by step with his eye. He that made the eye, shall he not see? he that made the memory, shall he not remember? Ah, my friends! memory's record within us will not stand alone in the great future day. God's record-book shall supplement and confirm its testimony.

A second evidence and preparation for the final judgment is that law of our natures by which every act and thought and desire leaves a permanent impress upon our characters. What we do affects what we are. Our outward acts are changing our inner being, so that if every particle of our past lives should be forgotten and the records of God's book itself should be erased, the mere state of our souls at the last day would show sufficiently what our lives had been. There is a law of growth by which every external influence combines with every manifestation of the internal life to produce our final settled characters; but no external influence alone can affect us. There must be the suborning of that influence by an evil will before it can harm us; a righteous purpose must bring it into subservience before it can do us good. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Climate and example and circumstances do not of themselves make men sinners as some philosophers would have us think. Sin has its origin in us and not outside of us. Yet every sinful thought and act has a reflex influence upon the heart from which it springs, and the soul gets from the habitual tone of these its complexion and character.

I might illustrate what I mean by the different effects of sad and happy thoughts, of virtuous and vicious desires upon the countenance. No man can habitually keep a happy heart without showing it in his face. The mind is forever chiseling away at the features and reproducing its own likeness there. The discontented, irritable, morose, hateful soul will inevitably give a scowl to the countenance. And so you have seen faces that seemed like walking pestilences, faces where every lust in the catalogue had set its seal, faces that pierced your heart as with a dagger when you passed them, faces in which a whole lifetime of drunkenness and debauchery was pictured out. What made them so? Did they become so all at once? No! single acts of shame and sin had one by one left their impress there; there had been a gradual growth in hideousness; beginning in the secret sins of youth, it had come at last to be a manifestation of hidden iniquity that needed no witnesses for confirmation. And just as good and evil thoughts leave their marks on the *countenance,* so love to God and good deeds to men or dislike of God and disobedience of his commands leave their marks on the *soul.* Every sin, however trivial, makes a wound; heal it over as you may, the scar will be left, and there it will remain until the Judgment. The first evil act drives the nail in; the repetition of the act drives it deeper and deeper still. And when the soul comes before God's bar, unbelief, pride, impurity, falsehood, whatever the sin may be, will be written, so to speak, upon the very features of the soul, and there will be but little need of further witness against it. Aye, there shall be many who now show fairly in the eyes of men, but who shall appear there when the secret sins shall be revealed, all covered with wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.

In the Diary of Kitty Trevylyan we have the report of a sermon by John Nelson, one of the early Methodists, which expresses this idea as a part of his own experience at conversion. He heard the account of the Judgment read from the book of Revelation and as he listened the scene seemed to pass before him. "Oh, what a scene was that!" he cries. "It was as if I had seen the Lord Jesus Christ sitting on his throne with the twelve apostles below him, and a large book open at his left hand, and as it were, a bar fixed about ten paces from the throne to which the children of Adam came up; and every one, as he approached, opened his breast as quick as a man could open the bosom of his shirt. On one leaf of the book was written the character of the children of God, and on the other the character of those who should not enter into the kingdom of heaven. I thought neither the Lord nor the apostles said anything, but every soul as he came up to the bar compared his conscience with the book and then went away to his own place, either singing or else crying and howling. Those that went to the right hand were but like the stream of a small brook, but the others were like the flowing of a mighty river." This description of the Judgment, like all others, makes use of material figures to express spiritual truths, but is there not a mighty power and meaning in that tearing open of the bosom and baring of the heart before God and the universe—that heart that carries in itself the evidences of sin and needs no accusation or sentence from the Judge to send it howling down to its own place?

And is not this law of character by which sin leaves its indelible marks upon us and binds itself inseparably to us, a constant reminder that God requireth that which is past? We are so made that we cannot escape from the consequences of disobedience, because we cannot escape from ourselves. Forgetfulness of the penalty will not hinder it from falling upon us. The sinner's own moral vileness and unlikeness to God is in itself an ever-growing penalty which will make heaven a hateful abode and hell the only refuge for his shame. And yet this effect of sin upon himself to make him evil and hateful in character is only a faint reflection of the effect of his sin upon God. God hates it more than we can. Sin not only drives the sinner from God, but drives God also from the sinner. When Milton describes the first sin as followed by the shock of an earthquake, in which all nature shuddered and gave signs of woe, he does not mean to impute to nature a consciousness of her own, but only to represent her as expressing God's repulsion from moral evil. The effect of sin upon the individual soul is but the counterpart to another effect upon the whole system of God, and both together are evidences and preparations for God's vindication of his defiled creation and violated holiness.

A third and last evidence of the truth contained in the text is furnished by the dependent and relative nature of conscience. By this I mean the fact that though conscience is perpetually declaring judgment against sin, and asserting complete authority over every other part of our nature, she does this always as one who has no power to enforce her own decrees, but who merely declares the verdicts of One who is higher than she is and who will sooner or later carry them into certain execution. Let me illustrate what I mean by this dependent and relative nature of conscience. You read every week in the newspapers of money anonymously sent to the treasury of the general government, money which the sender declares to belong to the United States. There, of course, is a hidden story of fraud or peculation. A man has robbed the government, but no one knows of the crime; there is no possibility of detection. What is it that leads to the restoration of the stolen sum? Ah, it is conscience! Conscience denounces the wrong, threatens vengeance, fills the man's mind with fears. What does he fear? Man's judgment, exposure, disgrace? No; he might go to his grave unsuspected. Is it conscience herself that he fears? No; conscience has no power to execute her threats; he might treat them as he treats the whistling of the wind if it were not for the conviction he has in his secret soul that the law which conscience reveals is the reflection of God's law, that the judgment of conscience is the evidence of God's judgment, that the threatenings of conscience are premonitory mutterings of the storm of God's anger. If conscience were severed from all connection with God he could brave her admonitions; but because she is God's representative, God's vicegerent, God's voice within his soul, he cowers and shrinks before her. And in this dependent and relative nature of conscience, recording as she does God's verdict, predicting God's sentence, never executing her own decrees, but solemnly assuring the soul that though long delayed the execution shall surely come, in this we have the witness of human nature itself to the certainty of a future judgment, or else human nature is a lie and God has made it to lie.

Consider then how awful is the meaning of these repeated verdicts of conscience against us. They are only signals to us of corresponding verdicts of almighty God against us. The sinner is a debtor against whom a hundred, yes, ten thousand separate judgments have been granted, and over whose head all these are held by a single creditor to whom he is an enemy. Conscience has been heaping up these unexecuted judgments for years against him, each time declaring the certainty of a final process in which the combined weight of them all shall be brought down upon him. Not one sin of the past year or of our whole lives is left out of that account; each one is marked down against the reckoning day. Even the heathen saw in conscience the echo of God's voice, and declared that "the sins of men leaped instantly into heaven and were writ on the parchments of Jupiter." And the book of Job, one of the most ancient books of the Bible, has an expression showing how the earliest races found this idea answering to their inward consciousness: "My transgression is sealed up in a bag," says Job, "and thou sewest up mine iniquity." It was the custom then, as in later times, to sew up a certain amount of gold in a bag, which was then sealed and labeled, and passed current for the amount specified on the label. Thus God accurately weighs and estimates our sins, so that not one of them is lost from his account. The long list is preserved in heaven, though many of its items have passed from our minds on earth.

We do not need to go beyond our own natures then to find evidence of a future Judge before whom we are to stand, and a future tribunal at which we are to render up account. That fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation which oppresses the sinner's heart when he peers into the darkness beyond the grave is no vagary of an excited imagination; it is God's prophecy of the coming storm. There have been men who, even this side the grave, seemed to experience by anticipation the agonies of those who are forever banished from the presence of the Lord, men who have rejected the mercy of God under the clearest light and the most aggravated circumstances, and so knew themselves hopelessly lost, men like the nobleman, of whom the venerable Bede tells us in his "Chronicles," that in his last sickness he answered every exhortation of the clergy with the despairing words: "It is too late now, for I am judged and condemned." But oh, how far short of the truth do our deepest convictions come!

"If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." Remember then, dear unconverted friends, that in conscience you have an evidence and preparation for the Judgment, and that its threatenings and anxious unrest have a meaning to you far more solemn than you have ever yet conceived. Do not treat them then as ill feelings which are to be put out of mind and forgotten, for as often as they come to you they come from God, they urge repentance, they repeat in various words and forms the one great truth, that "God requireth that which is past."

At the close of the twelvemonth the merchant strikes a balance of his accounts, estimates his profits, pays his indebtedness, and prepares for a new start with the opening year. It will be well for all of us to do likewise in our accounts with God. There is great danger in allowing God's accounts against us to run on from year to year unexamined and unsettled. They will easily become so large as to confound us and ruin us in the payment. Set down your good deeds and your evil deeds for the past year and see how you will come out. When you put down the good, remember that God calls nothing truly good which does not proceed from love to him and desire for his glory. When you put down the evil, remember that every act and word and thought of the past year which has not been holy and sincere and loving is a violation of God's law, and must be set down against you. There have been a half-million or more minutes during the past year. During how many of those have you obeyed God's command to love him with all your heart and might and mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself? For every minute when you have failed to obey that command you must put yourself down as God's debtor. During how many of these minutes of the year have you forgotten God and had every thought and aim concentrated upon your own interest and pleasure? Every such minute has marked the commission of a sin. And how does the account stand? Ah, my brethren, my friends, do we not see how overwhelming is the balance that lies against us on God's books? If God's hand should write it out before us in letters of fire as he wrote it upon Belshazzar's palace wall, would not our countenance change like his, and our frame shake with fear as we read: "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin,—thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting!"

Yes, we are utterly bankrupt. Our wickedness is great, and our iniquities infinite, and by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Taking only the past year into the account, the accumulation of trespasses is such that the good deeds of a lifetime could not blot them out. Nothing that we can ever do can blot out one of them; for, after all, this balancing of good deeds against the evil is only a figure of speech. No array of good actions can ever atone for one evil deed. The criminal convicted of crime can never be acquitted on the plea that the one evil deed was balanced by many good ones. Is there anything then that can balance this long account of sins? Is there anything that can hide this fearful list so that we shall not see it any more? And more than that—for that is very little—so that God shall not see it, nor bring it up against us either in this life or in the hour of death or in the day of Judgment? Yes, there is—blessed be God, there is! The red lines of Jesus' blood can cancel it all and hide a multitude of sins; his righteousness can be placed in the balance against our unrighteousness; his Spirit can cleanse us from an evil conscience and make our dark and unclean hearts as pure and white as the snow. That blood, that righteousness, that Spirit, may be ours. They are offered to us by the Saviour, and we may have them whenever we will take them in penitence and faith. In a felon's cell there lies a fellow-being whose life is forfeited by an act of murder. There he lies, the fearful record of the past behind him, around him only prison-walls and bars, before him only a little way ahead, clothed with all its terrors as the instrument of justice, the awful form of the gallows. If some competent authority could only enter that cell to-night and say: "Rise, here is your pardon; the past is blotted out; you are free!" would there not be joy in that poor sinful heart? Would he wait long before accepting his freedom? Dear friend, if you are still in your sins your soul is in a spiritual prison, from which escape is more hopeless still. Your own nature is your prison. In memory and character and conscience you may read that judgment is passed upon you, that death is before you. But there is One who has pity on you, who has by untold pains and sufferings purchased your release. It is Christ the Lord; he comes and brings you pardon, offers you freedom, promises entire oblivion of the past and complete restoration to his favor. He comes again at this most solemn time of all the year to press upon you your need of his help and the fulness of his salvation. Accept his offer now, before another neglected opportunity, another rejected warning, is added to the long list of your transgressions! The last hours of the year are passing—a few days more and the account will be closed until the heavens be no more. Oh, let the dear Redeemer write "canceled" across that dreadful catalogue of sins before it is sealed forever, and help you to begin a new year of holy obedience and of Christian trust. Then when God requires that which is past and summons you before him in judgment, Christ the advocate of sinners will answer for you and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

XLVII

ADDRESSES TO GRADUATING CLASSES OF THE ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY FROM 1900 TO 1912

1900

LOYALTY

Brethren of the Graduating Class: Both you and we have much to be thankful for to-day. We are grateful that we can close the first fifty years of the seminary's work by presenting to the churches the largest class we have ever sent out. You are grateful, I am sure, for the homogeneity and harmony which have made your class-work successful and delightful. You are the Class of 1900. The round numbers signify the ending of the old and the beginning of the new. A new century will soon dawn upon you, with both opportunities and responsibilities such as neither you nor your fathers have ever known. We cannot tell where God may lead you, what intellectual problems you may have to solve, what practical difficulties you may have to overcome. We hope that outward and visible success may be yours; whether you will attain it is known only to God. For only one thing can we offer the prayer of faith, namely, that you may to your last breath be loyal servants of Jesus

Christ. Let me say a few words to you then about LOYALTY.

Loyal, leal, legal, are all forms of the same root, and they hark back to the word which means *law.* Loyalty recognizes a law that binds us, a Providence that relates us to others, a supreme Will that lays us under obligation. To be loyal is to be true to any person or principle or institution or cause to which we owe fidelity. But loyalty is not a matter of the head so much as of the heart. It is more than cold legality. It is the warm subjective assent of the will, of the soul, of the whole being, to the claims which our various relationships impose.

I have heard the story of a bright young man whom his father and mother sent to college. In their poor country home they delved and spun to provide the means. He made a brilliant record and was much sought after in society. At length the day of graduation dawned, and the parents who had scraped and saved, in order to make his success possible, presented themselves in their homespun in the college town to witness the triumphs of their son. But the boy was ashamed of them in their humble garb; he kept them in the background; no one of all his friends was permitted to know that they were his parents. And they to whom he owed all learned that day how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child. If there is any sin that deserves the torments of hell it is filial disloyalty.

On the other hand, frank and generous recognition of our family ties, even though it involves the care of poor relations, is the noble thing. "Am I my brother's keeper?" was the utterance of the first murderer. But Ruth, leaving home and country and coming into the land of the stranger, has been an example of filial constancy through all these intervening ages. Early friends and neighbors come next to one's own family. Robert Burns left the belted earl with whom he was walking in the streets of Edinburgh to talk with a rough and hearty countryman from his own county of Ayr; and, when the earl reproved him for companying with one who wore such a coat, replied, "I wasna talking with the coat,—I was talking with the man."

All the world loves a lover, it is said. It is largely because we see in him an example of this loyalty:

The span o' life's nae lang eneugh,
  Nor deep eneugh the sea,
Nor braid eneugh this weary warld
  To part my love frae me.

Will the true woman betray the man she loves? Not

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
  An' the rocks melt wi' the sun.

The lark soars into the sky and sings as it soars, but it never forgets its nest and the young ones cradled there. So Wordsworth calls it, "True to the kindred points of heaven and home."

Without marital fidelity the bonds that unite us in society would be broken. Not only many a man's faith in man, but also many a man's faith in God, is bound up with faith in his wife, and her loyalty to him enables him to understand the love of Christ:

"For I am fickle," Fortune saith,
"But love is faithful unto death."

Association for several years with a college or seminary class binds us forever to some men whom we have made our friends, and the long process of the years only makes the tie more sacred. But we are bound not only to those who are our special friends among our classmates, but to all who are members of the class. Loyalty to this Class of 1900 will lead you to hold together in affection, so long as any two of you shall live, to seek the good of each classmate, to work for his advancement, to defend his honor, to help his influence, to pray for his true success. And a genuine loyalty to this seminary will make you eager to send men here to fill your places, to help its financial interests, to stand for its good name, and to invoke the blessing of God on its teachers and students, so long as the institution stands and stands for Christ. There was no nobler characteristic of Daniel Webster than his loyalty to Dartmouth College. When he addressed the chief justice with the words: "It is, sir, a small college,—and yet there are those who love it," the great man broke down, and the whole courtroom was in tears. Colleges and seminaries are strong only as they can depend on the loyalty of their sons. Thank God, that loyalty grows with time, with new experience of the power which education gives, and with new sense of the preciousness of early friendships and the molding influence of early examples.

It is worth one's while to have intercourse with the men of commerce and trade for the mere sake of learning the ideals that attract them. Some of those ideals are material and sordid. But others are lofty, taking hold on things unseen and eternal, and having in them something of God's righteousness. There is a business integrity which esteems the pledged word as sacred as life. It is worth while to know something of soldiers. There is a patriotism that will make any sacrifice for honor and for country. Regulus goes back to Carthage in fulfilment of his promise, though he well knows that he goes back to die. On the battlefield of Sedan, King William learned that one of his bravest young officers had been mortally wounded. He went directly to the tent where life was ebbing rapidly away. "My poor boy, is it well with you?" was his question. And the reply was, "All is well where your majesty leads!"

I would apply all this to Christ. All is well where he leads. "For me to live is Christ," says Paul. "Whether living or dying, we are the Lord's." All other obligations are only parts of our obligation to him who has redeemed us. We speak of loyalty to parents, family, friends, government, but all these are only phases of his administration. You are bound to a religious denomination only as it is his representative. Pastors, teachers, church, Scripture, derive all their authority from him. Law, conscience, principle, truth, these are but echoes of his voice. And to all of them we owe allegiance. I urge that we not only recognize that allegiance, but that we put into it the pride, the passion, the generous enthusiasm which we call loyalty.

There is a maxim which has saved many a man from being mean and wicked, an ingrate and a coward,—it is the maxim "*Noblesse oblige.*" It should never minister to pride, for nobility, rank, wealth, dignity of any kind, lays us under obligation. How great, then, is the obligation that rests upon each one of us, for whom not only Christ has shed his blood, but with whom he has shared his life! The whole Christian world has been stirred by Charles Sheldon's book, "In His Steps," not so much because of any felt duty to repeat the acts of Jesus' life, as because of the impulse it has kindled to walk worthily of him who has called us to his kingdom and glory. There are certain things which as a follower of Christ I cannot do; there are others which loyalty to him requires.

When we add this generous element, we have a principle far beyond any cold calculation of mere duty. Not, how much *must* I do for my Lord?—but how much *may* I do to show my love? The strong men who penetrated the ranks of the enemy to bring David a cup of water from the well of Bethlehem were not reproved by their leader. Even though he would not drink, he poured out the water as a thank-offering to God for the gift of such loyal hearts. So I can fancy Jesus our Lord rendering thanks for those who show the adventurous spirit, and who risk their lives for him in the hard places of the field.

Courage and devotion are contagious, and, because you are to be leaders of others, I desire that you should be conspicuous examples of loyalty. I would have you show that nobleness of mind that is superior to all considerations of personal interest, that is willing to make sacrifices for the cause, that can run risks, if need be, of unpopularity, of physical danger, of financial loss. Never be afraid to stand for the truth, when you know that you are right; never be afraid to avow your convictions, even though they run counter to the tide of feeling in church or community. God will be your defense, and you will hear him saying to you as he said to Jeremiah: "They shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee."

We have finished our teaching of this Class of 1900, and the seminary has done its work for each of you. I would have you loyal to the seminary and to us and to our teaching, only because, and in so far as, we have been loyal to Christ. Wherein we have erred, I would have you follow, not us, but the truth. God has much truth yet to break forth from his holy word,—may you be the discoverers and publishers of it! But the substance of the faith, the old gospel of sin and salvation, of the deity and atonement of Jesus Christ, this will not change, and I rejoice to believe that you will be faithful to it. In this and in other lands, show your loyalty to Christ, as during the past three years you have shown your loyalty to us and to one another, and I can ask no more.

You have had your drill,—now for the campaign. You go out with flying colors and beating drums. How many will answer to the roll-call fifty years from now, when perchance the seminary will celebrate its hundredth anniversary? Who will be the first to fall in the battle? Ah, how many solemn questions offer themselves and have no answer! We can only commend you to God and to the word of his grace, confident that he will make you loyal and brave and victorious, and that he will give you rest with us, when this cruel war with sin is over and the soldiers come marching home.

1901

RIGHT BEGINNINGS

Brethren of the Graduating Class: At the end of your long course of study you might possibly expect me to speak of last things, and eschatology is certainly an important part of doctrine. But first things are more important, because beginnings make endings. I do not find the word protology in the dictionary, and therefore I shall adopt another title and shall speak of RIGHT BEGINNINGS. The Class of 1901, the first class of the new century, may well consider the advantage to themselves, to the church, and to the world, of beginning aright.

Our Lord felt the importance of a right beginning. His baptism was a solemn self-consecration to the work of preaching and suffering and death that lay before him. His forty days of temptation in the wilderness were days of preparatory meditation and prayer, so that he returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. His disciples in like manner were bidden to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. Paul, when he was summoned to be an apostle, conferred not with flesh and blood, but went away into Arabia to seek divine illumination. And every Christian must burn his ships, cut off retreat, commit himself by public confession, if his life is to count for anything on the side of Christ. The only right beginning is a beginning with God. When young Josiah "began to seek after God," and when those who looked on could say of Paul, "Behold, he prayeth," a wise man could have predicted the reformation in Israel on the one hand and the evangelization of the Gentiles on the other.

A man's first days in the ministry set the standard for all that are to follow. There is a youthful decision and energy at the beginning. It is now or never. If the young preacher does not believe and dare at the first, it is ten chances to one that he never will. Why is it that in every biography we take such interest in the first letter, the first speech, the first enterprise? It is because the child is father of the man, and the fruit is wrapped up in the seed. In our own lives all times of new beginning are sacred and momentous. Does one ever forget the day when he entered college, or went into business, or contracted marriage? What vistas open at such times! What hours those are for new thoughts, for new resolves! Even the birthday and the New Year are messengers of God to us.

When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock they knelt at once in prayer. They gave themselves anew to God with the land to which he had brought their feet. So after a many a weary year of preparatory study you have come to the beginning of a new life, active service is before you, henceforth a man's work is demanded of each one of you. How shall you begin? Begin with God. Do your first works,—a new surrender, a new faith. If there have been omissions or neglects in the past, confess them now; if there have been transgressions, forsake them. It is never too late to mend. The new life upon which you enter is a blessed opportunity for new beginning and new laying hold of the strength of God.

May I outline for you the first day's work in the church of which you become pastor, or in the mission field to which you go? Of course it will begin with prayer, before you rise, as well as on your knees after you have risen. Then immediately before or immediately after your morning meal should come the taking of spiritual food, the reading of God's word for your own refreshment, admonition, and instruction. For a man who has had seminary education, that reading should be the reading of his Greek Testament, and the reading should be followed by serious and minute study of one small portion, with all the helps which grammar and lexicon and commentary can give. Begin your work with earnest pondering of the Scriptures, and let this become the habit of your life, without regard to the use which may be made of what you read in public discourse. Store your mind with the Bible, and your profiting will appear to all.

After your study of the Scripture, let the remainder of this first morning be given solidly to preparation for your pulpit. Have your set time for receiving calls, so that the morning may be free for study. Wrestle with the great themes of sin and salvation. Make your own sermons. Aim each week to produce one sermon that is fully up to your ability. You will find it hard at times to think, and harder still to write. But do not wait for inspiration. "Shall I wait for the Muse?" said a young writer to Samuel Johnson. "No," thundered out the doctor, "sit down and write doggedly!" For writing doggedly is the best way to summon the Muse. "While I was musing," said David, "the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue." Faithful work in preparation for the pulpit will become not only a habit but a delight, and the preacher's permanent success depends upon this right beginning.

Let the first afternoon be one of earnest pastoral activity. Seek out the poorest, the most afflicted, of all your flock. The rich have friends in plenty, and they can better do without you. Make sure that you do your duty to the humble, for they may have you for their only friend. But let your ministrations be religious and not merely social. Pastoral visitation may degenerate into gossip, and then time is worse than wasted. It may be high converse about the things of the kingdom, and then it is even better than preaching; indeed, it is preaching in private—the revival of the preaching of the early church. Whoever may meet you, let him know in that first conversation, by some word or tone of yours, that you are Christ's messenger, and that you wish to be of use to him in the greatest concerns of all.

The first sick person visited, the first funeral attended, the first marriage ceremony performed, the first acceptance of an invitation to the hospitality of a household, these you will remember long after; let them be prepared for by prayer and thought, and by earnest endeavor to make the most of them for your Master. As the first tone of the public speaker reacts upon himself and either encourages or depresses him, so the first experiences of the pastor react upon his life and influence his after work. The first call to the pastorate will test your willingness to hear and obey the voice of God, regardless of personal preference or interest. The first church served will show your energy, your tact, your devotion, or the opposite of these. The first sermon preached to your flock, with unspeakable anxiety, perchance, and yet with unspeakable joy, may be like an open door into heaven. The first year of your ministry, if by God's grace it be only a year of revival and of ingathering, may be a Pentecost, a feast of first-fruits, that shall presage a lifelong harvest.

The beginning contains in itself the ending, as the seed contains in itself the fruit. In the desire of those few Greeks to see him, Jesus saw the judgment of the world and Satan falling from heaven. Let us give over our postponements and let us see the kingdom of heaven coming here and now. He that believeth on the Son *hath* eternal life and does not need to wait for it. It does not matter how small the beginning may seem to be, if only it has the prospect of endless growth before it. The Mayflower once contained in its little cabin all there was of New England enterprise and freedom; and the twelve who met in that upper chamber were, notwithstanding, the church of God that was to overspread the world. For the seed of the kingdom has in it a divine life; though it is the least of all seeds to the sight of man, it shall become a tree under whose shade shall gather all the nations; not thirtyfold, sixtyfold, nor even a hundredfold shall be its rate of increase, for the little one shall become a thousand.

I remember the opening words of Mark the evangelist: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," and that word "immediately" which Mark is ever repeating and with which he hurries us on from the earliest manifestation of the great Wonder-worker to his death and resurrection. The end would never have come so gloriously if the beginning had not been right. And so with each of Christ's servants in the ministry. What is the time for your beginning? When you are married? When you are ordained? Next month? To-morrow? No, immediately, to-night, here and now. I bid you here and now reconsecrate yourselves to God and to the gospel of his Son, and lift your hearts in prayer, that as you go out from the undergraduate into the graduate world, from the life of preparation into the life of action, Christ himself may go with you. Then he that has begun a good work in you will surely perfect it, for it is this same Christ who says: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

1902

MORE TO FOLLOW

Brethren of the Graduating Class: The traveler in a mountain district sometimes follows a tortuous upward path whose meaning is disclosed to him only when he looks down upon it from an elevation.

You have reached such an elevation to-day. You see, as never before, the way in which God has led you. There have been incidents in your past lives which you did not understand at the time. Now you perceive that they were divinely ordered preparations for the future. There was more in your first self-surrender to God, more in your first acceptance of Christ, than you ever dreamed. It will take an eternity to discover the full meaning of your conversion. The evolution of your life was preceded by a divine involution. And therefore you can trust the future. You can believe that he who has begun a good work in you will surely carry it on to perfection and that there will be ever more to follow.

These words of the popular hymn, MORE TO FOLLOW, furnish the subject of my last words to the Class of 1902. There are three thoughts I would suggest to you. The first is that *God creates things in germ.* Beginnings are commonly small. It is so in nature: the oak grows from the acorn and the acorn from a single cell; the higher forms come from the lower; there was once an azoic ocean, and before that a chaotic nebula which only the one word "Let there be light" reduced to order and peopled with forms of life and beauty. It is so with man: the most comprehensive intellect was once infantile; the human race sprang from a single pair; and the first man doubtless came from the brute, though God's creative and organizing power wrought through the brute. It is so with God's truth: all the differential and integral calculus lies wrapped up in the simplest mathematical axiom; all the doctrines of theology are latent in the one declaration that God is holiness and love; the protevangelium spoken at the gates of Eden was the germ of Moses' law and David's song and Isaiah's prophecy; the Old Testament was God's preparation for the New.

From what infinitesimal beginnings did Christ himself advance to his glory and his throne! He who filled the universe and ruled over all became a microscopic speck, narrowed himself down so as to be next to nothing, was born of a Virgin, suffered, died, was buried, in order that from that buried seed might spring a redeemed humanity. Our faith—how small that was at the first, how wavering, how unintelligent—like the first ray of light that heralds the coming of the morning, yet almost indistinguishable from the preceding darkness! The church of Christ,—it once consisted of only two disciples who answered the Saviour's call, "Follow me!"—it was a grain of mustard-seed from which grew the tree in whose branches all the birds of heaven shall lodge. From little Bethlehem, obscure Nazareth, provincial Jerusalem, despised Palestine, the gospel of the kingdom went forth to conquer the world; and from this little world, one of the smallest planets that roll through space, it seems to be Christ's plan to make known to principalities and powers in heavenly places—aye, to the whole universe—the manifold wisdom of God.

God begins with germs; that is the first thought. The second thought is that *God himself is in the germs.* We have been hearing of late of "the new Infinite." The modern idea of the immanence of God has made the mere infinite of space and time inadequate. God is not infinite extension, so much as infinite energy. He dwells not only " beyond the flaming ramparts of the world," to use the expression of Lucretius, but he dwells in every flower and every diatom, so that the study of the least thing in the universe may open to us the whole treasury of knowledge. The most insignificant fragment of truth is of worth because it is a revelation of God, related to all other truth, fully intelligible only in the light of the whole.

Robert Browning has discerned this presence of God in all life. He says:

Great things are made of little things,
And little things go lessening, till at last
Comes God behind them.

The Christian can smile when the skeptic claims that God is unrevealed. God unrevealed? Why, everything reveals him. The heavens declare his glory. The thunder is his voice. " Nature," says Bishop Berkeley, " is God's ceaseless conversation with his creatures." The world is alive with God. Every vibration of air and ether is laden with messages from him. Marconi's wireless telegraphy, to be sure, requires an attuned " receiver." But the Christian is one who by a divine renewal has been qualified to recognize and to respond to some of the moral and spiritual impulses which God is transmitting from every atom, from every star, from every soul.

God is in nature. God is in the Bible. God is also in us, interpreting to us his own communications. When you are right, said the French philosopher, you are always more right than you think you are. In God we live, move, and have our intellectual and moral being. We can comprehend ethical truth only because God breathes into us something of his own divine life. We are not deists even as respects spiritual things. Christ in us is our only hope of knowledge, even as he is our only hope of glory. This indeed was the wonder of our regeneration, that it brought about an indissoluble union between the divine Christ and our weak, ignorant, and sinful souls. God imparted himself to us when he joined us to Christ. And so omnipotence and omniscience are at our service. Our little motors are connected with an infinite dynamo. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life. Underneath him are the everlasting arms. God is in the midst of his people. The gates of hell shall not prevail against his church. All things are ours, because we are Christ's and Christ is God's.

God begins with germs. God is in the germs. Let us supplement these two truths with a last truth: *God's germs have an inexhaustible vitality.* That was a great saying of Dante:

> God could not on the universe so write
> The impress of his power, but that his word
> Must still be left in distance infinite.

As the past, small or great, was only the seed and germ of the present, so the present is only the seed and germ of the future. Out of the few grains of wheat wrapped in the hand of the Egyptian mummy thousands of acres are now waving with harvests. Some single word of God's truth which you speak will go on multiplying itself until in the last great day you stand lost in adoring wonder at the harvest God has brought out of it. Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God," was the germ of Pentecost with its conversion of the three thousand, and yet Pentecost itself was but the feast of first-fruits; there shall yet be ingatherings in which a nation shall be born in a day. God has not spoken his last. More truth is yet to break forth from his holy word. Never will come a time in the endless future when Christ cannot turn to the sacramental host that follows him and say, "Greater things than these shall ye see."

God's will is absolutely changeless. His life operates unspent. In joining ourselves to Christ we tap a reservoir of infinite energy. Every declaration of truth is a torch capable of kindling a multitude of others. In every act of sacrifice there is power to renovate the world, not because the act in itself is great, but because he is great in whose strength it is performed. Let us value our own Christian experience,—it is God's pledge of greater things to come. With him is the residue of the Spirit. The single spark he has kindled may become a devouring flame; the few drops from heaven may turn to a downpour, so that there shall not be room to receive it; the soft breath of summer that moves in the tops of the mulberry trees may change to a mighty rushing wind that sweeps thousands upon thousands into the kingdom.

So mercy shall be built up forever. Each new gain shall be the foundation for an ever-rising structure of new achievement to God's honor and praise. The universe itself is in its infancy. This world is but the breeding-ground for the infinite spaces. Since even angels bend over the battlements of heaven and peer into the transactions of our planet, we may believe that there are other worlds to be enlightened, and that preaching does not belong to this world alone. The call to the ministry may be a call to eternal service. The tongue that stammers here may utter God's message gloriously in another sphere. The pastorate that is cut short by death may be continued over yonder in more favoring environment, and the life that seems a failure here may be crowned with glory there.

You will not take this thought, that there is more to follow, as an encouragement to rest on your oars, and to trust in the past, while you float idly on the current. Encouragement belongs only to the worker.

> Men, my brothers, men, the workers, ever reaping something new,
> That which they have done, the earnest of the things that they shall do.

I urge the future as a stimulus for the present. *Other*-worldliness is necessary in order to make the most of *this* world. Eternity is the Archimedean lever with which to move the things of time. Hitch your wagon therefore to a star. Cherish an abounding hope. Despise not the day of small things. Rejoice in every opportunity and in every little gain. Do not limit the Holy One of Israel. Have faith in God. He does not give his best at the beginning, but keeps his best wine to the last.

The Class of 1902 is dear to us, and we would ask for you the best of blessings. What better thing can we ask than this, that the God of hope will so fill you with his Spirit that all earthly labors, trials, sufferings, and afflictions shall seem light in comparison with the glory that is to be revealed! For the joy that was set before him Christ endured the cross, despising the shame. So may you put your very life into your work, knowing that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. To your own view your talents may be small, your field contracted, your converts few. Do not judge the harvest by the smallness of the seed—God begins with mere germs. But God himself is in these germs. God's germs have inexhaustible vitality. It doth not yet appear what we ourselves shall be. It doth not yet appear what the church of Christ shall be. But we know that, because the infinite God is in these small beginnings, through eternal ages there will be *more to follow.*

1903

NO OTHER FOUNDATION

Brethren of the Graduating Class: I have been meditating what thing I might say to you at this hour of parting, when the associations of three happy years are broken and you scatter to the ends of the earth. I would like to remind you of what has drawn you together in the past and of what will hold you together in spirit in the days to come. And I come back again, and for the last time, to the central thought of my teaching and the one thought which will guarantee your safety and success in the ministry. You go out to lay foundations of Christian character and life. I would remind you once more that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, even Jesus Christ." In these last moments then, let us fix our gaze upon him:

We would see Jesus, the great Rock Foundation
  Whereon our feet were set by sovereign grace;
Not life, nor death, with all their agitation,
  Can thence remove us, if we see his face.

"No other foundation"—that is my theme. There can be no other foundation, since the universe itself is built on Christ. Let us never forget that Christ, in the New Testament revelation, is the eternal Word, the outgoing of the Godhead, Deity in manifestation. All things were made through him and for him, and he is the organizing and unifying principle of the whole creation. He fills and upholds the universe. Gravitation and evolution are only the methods of Christ. All physical science is simply the disclosure of his omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent working. Astronomy shows us the hand of Christ guiding the movements of the stars. Chemistry shows us the hand of Christ binding together atoms invisible to human eye.

Earth has nothing sweet or fair,
Lovely forms or beauties rare,
But before my eyes they bring
Christ, of beauty source and spring.

Not only the universe in general, but humanity in particular, is created and upheld by Christ. He is therefore the foundation of all psychology, sociology, ethics, and history. He is himself the essential truth to be studied, and we are successful in these various pursuits only as we penetrate beneath the outward form to the inner substance, and see the personal Christ in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is the living vine of which all men are branches, either natural branches which refuse to receive his life and so wither, are cut off and burned, or spiritual branches which cling to the vine and are made fruitful forever. He is the greatest philosopher who most clearly traces in the human mind and in human history the image of God of which Christ is the complete and perfect expression.

More especially all religious knowledge has him for its foundation. He is the Light that lighteth every man. Rays of his light have penetrated even the darkness of heathenism. It is he who has written the law of God upon the hearts of men everywhere, so that they are without excuse for their sins. He has not left himself without a witness. Conscience and tradition, aspiration toward the good and fear of retribution for the evil, are Christ's advance agents among men. There was also a special work of his in the prophets. It was the Spirit of Christ in them that spoke beforehand of the things which in the fulness of time he was to suffer. And, finally, the eternal Word is revealed in the written word. The Bible is the record of his historic revelation. He is the explanation of its genesis, the ground of its authority, the interpreter of its meaning. Inspiration can be understood only in the light of him whose revelation of the Father was a gradual one—first twilight, then dawn, at last broad and perfect day.

He is the church's one foundation. This he could not be if his life did not pervade all humanity. Because he is the life of all, he could bear the sin of all, and could work out both an individual and a collective salvation. In all the affliction of men he has been afflicted; he has suffered in all temptation; he is the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. That suffering holiness of God is concentrated and demonstrated in Christ's historic sacrifice upon the cross, and so presented to our gaze it melts and subdues us. But the cross was not itself the atonement,—it was rather the revelation of the atonement, an atonement in which we in our measure share, when we fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ for his body's sake, which is the church. The church and the kingdom are only expansions of Jesus Christ.

The ministry has no foundation but Christ. We speak sometimes of the founders of churches, and Paul says that, as a wise master-builder, he has laid a foundation. But he at once disclaims being himself the foundation. "Other foundation," he says, "can no man lay, but that is laid, even Jesus Christ." We lay that foundation when we preach Christ as the Truth. Let others do superficial work; if they will. But let us know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. We lay that foundation when we preach Christ as the Life. An almighty power accompanies our message, and we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Christianity is not a circle, but an ellipse, and there are two centers,—Christ *for* us, and Christ *in* us. But it is the same Christ in both the foci. The corner-stone of the Christian building presents two sides to the observer, but it is but one stone. We preach Christ *for* us, when we preach a complete atonement and a finished work upon the cross. We preach Christ *in* us, when we preach a living Redeemer, present with his people to the end of the world. There are those who deny the *Christ for us,* and so have no satisfaction to offer either to the violated holiness of God or to the awakened conscience of man; and there are also those who deny the *Christ in us,* the only guarantee of life and power. I would charge you to hold fast both of these; for without either one of them you lack the true foundation for the work of the ministry.

But how solid the foundation is for those who build upon Christ! The rock-ribbed hills shall be dissolved, but he shall abide, for the hills rest upon him. Human philosophies shall be outgrown, but he who is the inner truth at the basis of all philosophy is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. The preacher who has Christ for his foundation can ring out his message with accents of absolute conviction, for he knows that, though heaven and earth pass away, Christ's words shall not pass away. The work of the ministry permits unlimited freedom of method. Jonathan Edwards and Joseph Parker looked at Christ from different angles of vision, but each had his rights. Charles H. Spurgeon and Charles G. Finney could never have worked in the same harness, but it would be hard to say which of the two was the more useful. It takes all the saints of all the ages to apprehend the many-sided Christ. It takes all varieties of field at home and abroad to reveal the infinite sufficiency of Christ's gospel. Christianity has many kinds of product; let each of us run his own mill. But one thing let us do, let us build upon the one foundation, let us make Christ the beginning and middle and end of our preaching; let us merge ourselves and our lives in him; for to stand with Christ is to stand with God, and to stand forever.

We who have taught you have a peculiar affection for this class, and a peculiar hope for your future. Few classes represent so great variety of endowment. You go to very different sorts of work. You will be separated by the diameter of continents and by the breadth of oceans. But you have learned your oneness in Christ, and on him you have built your hope. That rock will never fail you. It stretches beneath the oceans, and, compared with its greatness, the oceans are but superficial. Even the granite foundations of the mountains are but a faint analogue to the supporting strength of Christ, for he holds the globe itself in the hollow of his hand, and all authority in heaven and in earth is his. To him who is the one and only foundation upon which the ministry, and the church, and the truth, and humanity, and the universe, are built, I commend you, praying that you may never be moved from that sure basis of all doctrine and all conduct, and that you may be privileged to be partners with God in laying this sure foundation of peace and virtue in the hearts of a multitude of others. Then in labor and in trial, in success and in failure, in joy and in sorrow, in life and in death, you can say serenely:

> On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
> All other ground is sinking sand.

1904

BREADTH IN THE MINISTER

Brethren of the Graduating Class: Your three years' course in the seminary has been saddened by the deaths of two noble instructors—men whose strong personality and manly ways have made a lasting impression upon you. Doctor True and Doctor Pattison were in many respects unlike. Yet they had one characteristic in common,—they were men of public spirit. The range of their interests was wide. All that was going on in the world concerned them and became tributary to their own special work. This feature of their character and help to their usefulness suggests to me the theme for my farewell address to you this evening. I wish to speak to you of breadth in the minister. Think first of the demand for breadth, and secondly of the provision for breadth.

First, consider the *demand* for breadth. The world is larger now than it was in the days of our fathers, and we know more about the world than they did. Telegraph and telephone have annihilated distance, and the daily press tells us to-day what happened yesterday in Tokyo and in St. Petersburg. We not only know more, but we feel more. There is a new sense of community among the nations. We no longer say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Armenians and Chinese claim our sympathy. Oppressed wage-earners at home appeal to us and we cannot shut them out from our regard. Iniquity in high places and in low places is unveiled and reprehended more and more. There is a growing public conscience side by side with a growing public intelligence. We are not content to let evil go unchallenged. There must be some remedy for human ills, for the greatest as well as for the least.

Now the minister of Christ is sent to apply his gospel to the times in which he lives. To do this he must discern the signs of the times. He must not preach a mediæval theology, but a theology intelligible in our own day. It should be the faith once for all delivered to the saints, but it should also be that faith in its inmost essence, vitally apprehended, not wrapped up in the cerements of antiquated formulæ, but dressed in modern guise and adapted to modern needs. Our congregations are so well trained, they have read so much of literature and history, their interests are so wide and varied, that no preacher can hold their attention or permanently lead them unless he is a broadly read and a deeply thoughtful man. Doctor Robinson used to say that it has been ordained of Almighty God that the man who dips into everything never gets to the bottom of anything. It is certain that the minister must know everything about something—that is, about the gospel he is set to preach. But it is equally true that to command men's interest in that gospel he must also know something about everything.

The office of the ministry is a prophetic office. The minister has no new revelation from heaven, but he is taught by the Holy Spirit to make new applications of the old revelation. What you see in the microscope depends largely upon the lights you throw upon the object,—light from beneath or from the right discloses features which light from above or from the left did not reveal. So the business of the preacher is to throw upon Scripture the various lights of etymology, grammar, archæology, geography, literature, history, science, logic, and philosophy, and so to bring out of his treasure things new as well as old. Moreover, he is to apply Scripture principles to all the varying conditions of life. Like his Master, he must remember that men have bodies as well as souls. There are a multitude who work with their hands, and they are tired. The temptations of the young are not the temptations of the old. Yet the pastor must feed each member of his flock, and give to each his portion of meat in due season. Surely all this requires in him a breadth of nature, a breadth of culture, a breadth of sympathy.

The Scripture enjoins this breadth. "Give ye them to eat," Jesus said to the disciples, when the five thousand were going hungry. This suggests my second thought: the *provision* for breadth. It is in Christ himself. He could bid the apostles give to the five thousand, because he first gave to them himself and his power. He can enjoin upon us breadth of mind and heart, because all fulness dwells in him and he himself is ours. He is all in all. He includes all nature, all truth, all beauty, all art. He is the impelling force in the education and civilization of the race. History is the record of his administration. Industrial progress and political reform are forward steps in his moralizing of mankind. And these activities of Christ throw light upon his gospel and give new dignity to his kingdom. He aims at a redeemed society, as well as a redeemed church. He would not merely rescue here and there an individual from the slough of sin, but he would drain the slough so that others may not fall into it. Christ is equal to all these needs, and he will make us equal to them. He will make us broad as the world, broad as the heart of humanity, broad as the future that stretches away before his church.

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." That is a large program for the Christian minister, but not too large, since he has Christ's two books of nature and Scripture to instruct him, and the Holy Spirit of truth to take of the things of Christ in both and interpret them to him. I would not have you think that I advise you to be politicians or journalists or school commissioners, side by side with your work in the pulpit and in the pastorate. But I would have you in touch with all progress and reform, with all literature and science, with all classes and conditions of men, and all as a means of magnifying Christ and of showing the universal and endless reach of his saving truth.

There is a broad church spirit, so called, which the Christian minister should antagonize and oppose. It is the spirit that thinks so much of other religions that it despises the evangelical faith. It thinks so highly of man in his natural state that it sees no need of Christ and his Cross. It has no doctrine of sin, and so has no doctrine of salvation. The breadth to which I exhort you is a different breadth from this. Not the divinity of man, but the divinity of Christ, should be your theme. If you believe in that Christ to whom all power in heaven and earth is given, who is the life of nature and the ruler of the nations, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and whose church is the fulness of him that filleth all in all, you will be broad enough. His Spirit will keep you from the breadth that is only a name for false liberalism, and will preserve you from scattering your powers, even while you ceaselessly endeavor to set forth to men the infinite variety of his truth and grace.

There is no use of inveighing against the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites. They have no friends, and denunciations of their sins will be a waste of strength. But to meet the evils of the present time and to apply the gospel to them, this is our labor and call. You are to rise above Pharisaic restrictions and Sadducean rationalism, and to represent the large-mindedness and sympathy and joy of Jesus. Let your preaching be evangelistic; aim first to bring men to Christ. But let your preaching be also educational; aim to make men perfect in Christ. All truth is your province. You have unlimited opportunities of self-development. Be broad yourselves, in order that you may broaden others. There is nothing that honors Christ so much as a noble manhood given to his service. The demand for breadth in the ministry is imperative. The provision for breadth is all that we could ask. Through the knowledge of the Son of God let us strive to attain ourselves, and let us incite others to attain, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

I hardly need say to you that this will be impossible unless you accustom yourselves to look upon the things of sense and time *sub specie eternitatis;* from the point of view of the future life and of the judgment-day. Things that are near assume disproportionate importance. We need to look down upon them from a height in order to estimate them rightly. Other-worldliness is necessary in order to make life in this world normal. Eternity furnishes the *που στω* from which to move the things of time. Thank God, this same Christ, of whom I have so often spoken, gives us the proper point of view, for he is the same yesterday and to-day and forever, and his wisdom can make us broad.

My theme seems peculiarly appropriate to this class and to this time. You have come from widely separated places. You are soon to be scattered to the ends of the earth. The missionary zeal which you have shown in your past work and in your choice of fields of labor is evidence that this idea of breadth has taken root in your minds. Remember now that it is breadth only in Christ,—not the breadth of godless ease and self-seeking, but the breadth of holy living and of loving service. Though you may be sundered by the whole diameter of the globe, you will still in spirit be drawing closer to one another, as you get nearer to Christ, the all-encompassing and ever-living Lord. You go out with our prayers and our blessings. We expect great things of you, because we believe that you will preach Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him you will be made full.

1905

MADE UNTO US WISDOM

Brethren of the Graduating Class: One of the best signs of mental progress is that we come to recognize our own ignorance. It would not be wonderful if this day of your graduation from the theological seminary should be the day of all days when you feel most keenly the insufficiency of your equipment for the ministry. You are to venture upon an unknown sea, with but little experience of navigation. Youth and hope are good allies, but you need something more. I would fain say a parting word of cheer, and that, something more substantial than the customary *bon voyage*. Fortunately, my word is also a word of God—a word with which the Apostle Paul used to comfort his soul. It is this: *Christ is made unto us wisdom.*

The old theologians talked of prevenient grace, and quoted the psalm: "The God of my mercy shall prevent, or go before, me." But they never knew how greatly Christ's wisdom antedates ours. "The Light that lighteth every man" is the creative source of all *our* mental life, and our reasoning processes are valid only as a higher Reason operates in them. You look back upon your past history and you see that little events had an influence in shaping your career which you never suspected at the time when they occurred. You were debating the question whether you would go to college,—the chance word of a friend determined your decision. Like the king of Babylon, you stood at the parting of the ways between good and evil,—a sermon from some revival preacher led you to give your heart to God. Should you serve God in some secular calling, or should you devote yourself to the ministry of the gospel? You thought you weighed the problem on its own merits and that you worked out your own salvation. Now you see that it was God who worked in you to will and to work of his good pleasure. And the God who thus revealed himself in your experience was Christ, for Christ is God's only Revealer. Christ was made to you Wisdom.

The past throws light upon the present. For some of you there are important questions yet unsettled. Where shall you go? What sort of ministerial work are you best fitted for? Do Christian lands or heathen lands utter the loudest call? Should you seek a place to labor, or should you wait for the place to offer itself? No human being can answer these questions for you. But Christ can answer them. He can give you a vision like that of the man of Macedonia which was granted to Paul. He can impart the discerning Spirit which shall guide you to the place of his selection,—the place precisely fitted for you, and the place for which you have been fitted from the foundation of the world.

But suppose you have found your place and your work. You tell me that there are important points of doctrine with regard to which your minds are not settled. Remember that in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and that Christ is yours. Christ is the truth, and you have the promise that the Holy Spirit will take of the things of Christ and will show them to you. He does not promise that you shall be omniscient, nor even that encyclopædic knowledge shall be yours at the moment of your prayer. But the promise is that he who lacks wisdom and asks of God shall have large and liberal supply, help in every time of need, new grace to-day in place of the grace of yesterday, and so a larger and larger understanding of God and of his plan of salvation. When the vastness of the universe and the dreadfulness of human misery and guilt oppress you, cast your care upon Christ, for he cares for you. Do his will and you shall know of the doctrine. Every day Christ will give you his message, first for your own soul and then for the souls of others, and Isaiah's words shall be yours: "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught."

Christ will be made to you Wisdom in your pastoral work. The young minister has to confront enormous evils in the community. If the church were perfectly pure, he might feel himself equal to the fight. But when the garrison has traitors among its number, the defense of the fortress becomes difficult; aye, when the commandant himself is weak, who shall inspirit the soldiers? A pastor seldom feels his helplessness more than when he is urging a convicted sinner to break with the world and surrender himself to Christ; he never feels his helplessness more than when he is urging professed Christians to renounce their worldly ambitions and to give their property, their voices, and their influence to the cause of Christ. The problems of church quarrels and of church discipline require more than mortal wisdom to manage. It is an infinite resource upon which we have to rely. Christ is equal to any emergency. Our necessity is his opportunity. Let discouragement and opposition only drive us to him, and we shall be given the wisdom that is profitable to direct. Committing our ways to him, he will surely direct our paths.

There are many questions of marriage, of finance, of affliction, which can never be settled in advance. It is not best to anticipate trouble. It is enough to know that with the trial Christ will provide the way of escape. Disappointments will come to have a different spelling and to mean only his appointments. Light is sown for the righteous and joy for the upright in heart,—sown, like seed hidden in the dark earth, but certain to manifest itself in flower and fruit. Even seeming evil will be found to be among the all things that work together for good. There will be plans that, so far as human sight can pierce, fail of accomplishment, and ideals that fail to be realized. But God looks at the intent of the heart. He takes the will for the deed. With him my success is not something outside myself, but within the circle of my own personality.

> Thoughts hardly to be packed
> Into a narrow act,
> Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
> All I could never be,
> All men ignored in me,
> This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Our first business then is to have Christ for our wisdom, in our own hearts and lives. The kingdom of God is first of all within us. Christ is made unto us wisdom, because he is also made our justification, sanctification, and redemption. But the triumph of Christ within is the pledge and earnest of his triumph without. He who spared not his own Son will, with him, freely give us all things. The good we strove for shall be ours some day. " No work begun shall ever pause for death." God has an eternity to work in. And only in eternity shall it be known how wise they were who took Christ for their wisdom, and who followed him even unto death.

Dear brethren, you go out from us with our blessing upon your heads. You leave in our hearts glad memories of your faithfulness. We shall follow you with our prayers. We cherish high hopes for your future. But all these hopes are based upon our confidence that Christ is made to you wisdom. There are many snares before your feet, many powers of evil to attack you. There will be fightings without and fears within. But you have Christ. He is the Victor, and the victor's wreath is upon his brow. He can make you victorious, and can give you too, the victor's crown. This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. You have joined yourselves to him. Now abide in him, and the very wisdom of God shall be yours.

1906

PRAYER AND MINISTRY

Brethren of the Graduating Class: Last words ought to be memorable words. I would like to sum up for you the whole substance of my teaching and the whole influence of the seminary. I would like to say the one thing which will be of greatest service through your future lives. I speak to you therefore of PRAYER AND MINISTRY.

You remember that, when deacons were chosen by the early church, the apostles urged the choice in order that they might give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. They left the care of the body to others and devoted themselves to care of the soul. Sociology may be the business of deacons; the minister's business is theology. The work of the preacher naturally leads to the work of the deacon. But while the deacon serves tables, the preacher must see that there are tables to be served; or, in other words, must make men Christian and keep them so.

The Christian ministry is a spiritual vocation. The preacher is a communicator, not of earthly bread, but of the bread of life. He deals with God's truth. He cannot give, unless he first receives. And prayer is receiving, or the condition of receiving. Actual reception of the truth from God is the indispensable condition of a fruitful ministry. But you ask: Have we not the truth already in the Scriptures? Yes, in an external and mechanical way, not in any such way as to move us or others. The automobile may have within itself all the forces and appliances for motion, yet may be cold and dead. There is a clutch that sets its latent energies to work. Prayer is the clutch that makes the truth effective, sets all the machinery of the soul in motion, and so reveals the hidden power within.

Prayer and ministry! The apostles, in choosing that order of the words, seem to have put prayer first, not only in time, but in importance. It is as much as to say: We are only media, instruments, channels of communication. The truth, the love, the power, must come from above. "In thy light shall we see light." I am inclined to believe that all errors of doctrine have resulted from the neglect of prayer. I doubt whether men who live a life of prayer can doubt the unity and sufficiency of Scripture, the supremacy of righteousness in God, the depravity and helplessness of man, God's initiative in human salvation, the deity and atonement of Christ. There is something in prayer which impresses all these truths upon the mind, if indeed prayer does not implicitly involve and presuppose them.

Prayer is detachment from the world and attachment to Christ. It is the love of Christ that constrains us; not our love to Christ nor Christ's love to us, but Christ's love *in* us, the great fountain overflowing and filling the little pipes and tanks constructed to receive it. But prayer lifts the gates, removes hindrances, and lets the tide flow in. Abiding in Christ is abiding in his love, and that abiding is impossible without prayer. I do not believe that loveless and selfish living is ever found in connection with earnest and habitual prayer. I am not speaking of the vain repetitions of heathenism or of Romanism, but of the real daily communion with God which we call believing prayer. The great lovers of their kind like Livingstone and Paton have been men who devoted hours at a time to prayer. Prayer was the laying of the head on Jesus' breast, the drawing near to the heart of Christ, the making of his sympathies and affections to be ours.

Prayer is an exercise of will. Coleridge called it the intensest exercise of the human understanding. It is that, but it is more. The will embraces the understanding, and prayer requires will. We dislike to think, but we still more dislike to pray. Only as the Holy Spirit helps our infirmities do we ever pray aright. But here more than anywhere else do we find that, in our working out of our own salvation, it is God who works in us, both to will and to work of his good pleasure. And the result is that our strength is the strength of ten, because our heart is pure. I do not believe that men of prayer are ever left to impotence and uselessness. Even when they are thrust into dungeons, they are prisoners of Jesus Christ; and, though the foundations of the prison may not be shaken nor the jailers converted, yet their bonds are made to further the interests of the gospel and to manifest the power of Christ.

I am persuaded that all decline in doctrine or polity, in conscientiousness or liberality, in evangelistic activity or missionary zeal in our churches, is due to neglect of prayer. I am persuaded also that the only remedy for these ills is in new supplication, and that the ministers of the churches must, above all things else, be instructors and examples of perseverance and power in prayer. Does it seem strange to you that one who represents an institution for theological education should so emphasize one of the means of success? Ah, let us not mistake! Prayer is primary, education secondary. With prayer the world can be converted, education or no education. But all the education in the world will not convert the world without prayer. You have had the education. Now the one question of your lives is: Will you be men of prayer?

Prayer requires will. You never will be men of prayer unless from the beginning of your ministry you determine that prayer shall have the first place, and not the second place, in your plan of life. And this must be no mere closet resolve, it must be organized into habit, and made your regular business. We smile at the formal and mechanical worship of the Roman Church. But let us give credit to its priests. They do give time to devotion. And we must give time, and the best time, to prayer, if we would make it a living power in our lives. The most searching question that can be put to the ministers of our day is this one: Do you daily set apart the first and the best hour of your day for private prayer and meditation upon Scripture? How much of spiritual barrenness and despondency, how much of ill success in preaching and pastoral work, can be accounted for, by the mere fact that ministry was not preceded by prayer!

All great revivals of religion, all great leaderships in the kingdom of God, have been born in prayer. All the great crises in Jesus' life, his baptism, his choice of his disciples, his transfiguration, his agony in Gethsemane, were preceded or accompanied by prayer, prayer often long continued, and accentuated by strong crying and tears. Are we better than the Son of God, that we can dispense with prayer? If he upon whom the Spirit rested without measure needed refreshment and reenforcement for his work, shall we say that we can do without them? My brethren, our praying will be the measure of our personal religious progress and of our success in winning men to Christ.

With prayer all other things will go that pertain unto life and godliness. The soul that abides in Christ and in which Christ abides will never be left desolate. There is no spiritual orphanage for those who use the Lord's appointed means. He has promised to manifest himself to them and through them. They shall bring forth fruit, and the world shall see in the stately edifice of Christian character and in the growing conquests of the kingdom the evidence that prayer is not in vain. Prayer is simply the lining up of the human will to meet the divine will, the ratifying of God's decree by our decree. God accomplishes his purposes through the prayers of his people, so that where there is no prayer there is no ministry.

I have argued this matter as if it were a mere question of privilege. But it is a question of duty. When Jesus says, "Ask, and ye shall receive," the word "ask" is not a subjunctive, meaning, "If ye ask, ye shall receive." It is an imperative. Prayer is the duty and the business of the minister's life. And so, as my last word to this Class of 1906, of which I have such happy memories and such exalted hopes, I urge the duty of unremitting and earnest supplication. May wisdom and love and power be yours, because you detach yourselves from secular concerns, and give yourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word!

1907

SINGLENESS OF MIND

Brethren of the Graduating Class: When our Lord came to his baptism, he consecrated himself to the work before him. In the waters of the Jordan he was buried in the likeness of his coming death, and was raised again in the likeness of his coming resurrection. In this symbolic act he defined the purpose of his life; he put all other aims aside; he surrendered himself absolutely to the will of God. He could say, with the prophet: " Therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame."

You have come to a similar crisis in your own lives. Your preparatory work is over. The future, with its promise of labor and struggle and reward, beckons you onward. With you, as with Jesus, all depends upon the attitude of your souls. Have you an undivided heart? Can you say with Paul: " I determined not to know anything . . . save Jesus Christ, and him crucified "? It is SINGLENESS OF MIND to which I would exhort you, singleness of mind in your pursuit of truth, in your building up of character, and in your doing of good to others.

Just one preliminary word as to the meaning of the phrase " singleness of mind." It implies that a unified life is the only normal, happy, or successful life. We are complex beings, with many diverse impulses and powers. Sin has wrought disharmony and disorganization. Intellect and affection often work against each other; conscience and will are at cross-purposes. Only the fear and love of God can reduce our faculties to order and can give us peace, purity, and power. " Unite my heart to fear thy name," should be our constant prayer. A double life is at best a weak life. When it is kept up consciously and intentionally, as is so well illustrated in Stevenson's story of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, it becomes hypocrisy and wickedness.

The single eye—consider now how indispensable it is in gaining knowledge of the truth. Why is it that men run into error and make shipwreck of their faith? Is it not because they neglect to do the duties which they know, delay when they ought to go forward, parley with doubt and listen to temptation, turn away their thoughts from the practical and attend to the merely speculative? It is only the eyes of the heart that really see, and those eyes are the conscience and the will. We choose what we will believe, and freedom is given us for this great decision. How great the need that these eyes be enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so that by doing the truth we come to know the truth!

There are two words of Goethe which we do well to remember. The first is, "When all is said, the greatest art is to limit and isolate one's self." The second is, "Loving sympathy is essential to productive criticism." Let us add that man's greatest exercise of freedom is in the will to believe. We are not passive creatures at the mercy of external influences, white paper for the universe to make its marks on. We determine what shall influence us, and in that determination we limit ourselves and reveal our characters. And there is nothing arbitrary or undignified in this. All God's works are self-limitations of the divine nature, and all worthy work of ours is the result of self-limitation also. We must inhibit extraneous impulses and attractions, and hold our minds to a single thought. Otherwise the truth evades us. It tolerates no divided allegiance. "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light";

but “ if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness! ”

The single eye—without this you cannot build up a strong and consistent character. This is a time for fundamentals; do not blame me if I remind you of the first commandment of the Decalogue, “ Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” and of that greater commandment, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.” The single eye is indispensable, if we are to choose the right object of living—an object which will transform us into its own likeness. God’s love is the root and incentive to all virtue. We must set the Lord always before our face, that we may not be moved. And since Christ is the Lord, God manifested for our redemption, we are to see God in him, and, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are to be transformed into the same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

It is character that counts in God’s sight, and it is character by which we are to be judged. True, we are saved by character only as that character is the result of Christ’s indwelling, rather than the result of our self-righteous striving. Yet a religion that does not change the heart, subdue the passions, crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, will not pass the test of the great final day. Christian doctrine without Christian ethics is a tree without fruits, but it is equally true that Christian ethics without Christian doctrine is a tree without roots. The single eye is needed if we are to be rooted and grounded in Christ. We must choose him as the object of all our activity and the source of all our strength. We must count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of him. For us, as for Paul, to live must be Christ.

The single eye—how indispensable in doing good to others! Singleness of mind is the only way to power. "This one thing I do," says Paul. There is a prize set before him, and toward that prize he runs. He forgets the things that are behind; he casts aside every weight; he redeems the time; he presses on to the mark. There are men who are happy in doing everything but the one task to which God has set them. The men who succeed, and who influence their generation, are those who absorb their energies in their appointed work, who turn small occasions into great, who do with their might what their hands find to do.

Gladstone attributed his success to his habit of giving his whole mind to one thing at a time. One of our best pastors declared that he had won by burying himself in the work to which God had called him. Moody resolved to prove what God could do through a man wholly devoted to his service. Jehoshaphat set his face to seek the Lord, and the Lord did great things for him and by him. When almost all Israel perished in the wilderness, God said of Caleb: "Because he . . . hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land . . . and his seed shall possess it."

We expect great things of this Class, not so much because of your intellectual and social gifts, as because you have in your seminary course shown something of this singleness of mind of which I have been speaking. We have confidence that you have made the great decision, and have made it aright. But now, before we part from you, I call upon you to make it again, to reaffirm it with renewed emphasis. You cannot serve God and Mammon. You can have but one ruling passion. Let that be the love of your Maker and Redeemer. God forbid that you should glory save in the Cross of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

May I remind you also that you have but one life to live, and that life is short? Let it all be given to Christ, your God and Saviour, and to the saving of the world for which he died. Preach Christ, the living and present Redeemer, as the one panacea for the world's disorders, the one hope and refuge of mankind. Christ is all and in all, and your Christianity is applicable to all social, political, and moral needs. Be as broad as Christ, but then be as narrow as Christ also. Declare that there is no other name given among men whereby they can be saved, that he who has seen Christ has seen the Father, that he who denies the Son denies also the Father who has sent him.

We believe in one Lord, one faith, one baptism. But we also have fellowship with all who are seeking the truth, because we believe that Christ is the Light that lighteth every man. Our singleness of mind sees Christ in all who labor disinterestedly for the welfare of humanity, while yet we hold ourselves bound to show them the way of the Lord more fully than many of them have yet apprehended it. We must wait for the great testing day before we can finally estimate their faith and their works. But Christian love can see gleams of light even in darksome places, and can believe that many whom the church has ignored or cast out, aye, many whom on earth it never knew, shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God.

You are soon to be scattered to the ends of the earth. But your fellowship will continue, because you are one in Christ, and by one Spirit have access to the Father. We trust that you will ever live in fellowship with us, and for this we have the same guarantee in the fact of our common relation to Christ. Wherever you go, we shall remember you and pray for you. We shall hope to see your faces again, when you return to the seminary as visitors or examiners. And though some of us may be absent because God has taken us, the fellowship will not be broken; the interruption will be only outward and temporary; they who sowed and they who reaped will at last rejoice together.

And now, with this last exhortation to singleness of mind, in the pursuit of truth, in the building up of character, in devotion to the saving of men, I commend you all, members of this beloved class, to Him who is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. We have dedicated this seminary to Christ, our God and Saviour, and to him, the omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent Lord, we now dedicate you. May he help you to fight the good fight, to finish your course, and to keep the faith. May you be among the wise who at the last shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and, having turned many unto righteousness, as the stars forever and ever! And to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen.

1908

THE JOY OF THE LORD

Brethren of the Graduating Class: I give you a motto to-night. It will serve you as you go out to your work. I hope you will carry it with you all your lives. It is a well-worn motto, for, as nearly as I can compute, it is twenty-three hundred and fifty years old. It comes down to us from the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, when a new Jerusalem had to be built upon the ruins of the old. In view of their poverty and weakness the Jews were tempted to mourn. But their leaders restored the feast of Tabernacles which commemorated God's guidance of his people in the wilderness. They began the public reading of the law. Yet they urged the duty of gladness. And the reason for it all was the motto which I repeat to you to-night, "For the joy of the Lord is your strength."

How much of the motto those Jews understood, I do not know. It must have reminded them of the covenant-keeping Jehovah whose representatives they were, and whose protection insured their safety. Even the human authors of the saying may not have known all it meant. It had a divine author, as well as a human. It was a word of the Lord, as well as a word of man. And we can interpret it better than could they. The joy of the Lord is the joy of Christ, and the joy of the Lord is our strength, because our union with Christ makes his joy our own.

There is no real joy apart from Christ. The joy of pardon is possible to us only as we become one with him who is justified in the Spirit, the perfect exemplar and source of redeemed humanity. There is One over whom sin and death have no more dominion. He has borne our guilt; he has made purification of sins; he represents us before God. In him we have entered into the very life of God; we are accepted in the Beloved; his joy of acceptance has become ours. The joy of the Lord is the joy of being pardoned after being condemned, of being right after having been wrong, of having peace with God after being shut out from his presence. And this is the first joy of the Christian life.

But it is not the last. There are the beginnings of purity and of unselfishness, which testify to a new force working in our natures. The joy of the Lord is our strength, not only because it takes away all fear of God's anger, but because it is evidence of a power to overcome evil and to do good. Joining ourselves to Christ, we have become partakers of his life, a life that is indestructible and eternal. I do not agree with Ritschl, when he makes mastery over the world to be the main blessing of redemption. But I do hold that the joy of the Lord is our strength, in part at least, because union with Christ imparts a holy energy which puts our sins beneath our feet, turns irksome duty into delight, impels to all manner of Christian work and service, and makes that work and service mighty to save men around us.

The joy of the Lord is the joy of self-sacrifice, and that because it is the joy of love. Not only peace and power are the fruits of it, but also partnership with Christ in his great work of saving others. Could you enjoy a Delmonico banquet if you knew that a thousand starving creatures at the door were crying for bread? Would you not rejoice to give up your own meal, and to distribute to them? The heathen conception of joy was that of feasting "on the hills, like gods together, careless of mankind." But the joy of Christ was the joy of coming down from heaven to feed the hungry, to succor the oppressed, to seek and to save those that were lost. And we have the joy of our Lord only as we enter into the fellowship of his sufferings, and find it more blessed to give than to receive.

There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth. What joy that must be in the heart of God! It is that joy which in Christ overflows and takes possession of us. It is a joy of triumph as well as of sacrifice. The long labor shall not be in vain. God's elect shall be gathered in. The joy of the Cross shall become the joy of the Crown. Peace, power, partnership, these shall be followed by possession. The meek shall inherit the earth, and all things shall be theirs. Indeed, all things even now are ours *de jure;* they shall be ours *de facto.* Because we are Christ's, and Christ is God's, the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.

This may be the last class which I address on such an anniversary occasion. Whether this be so or not I take pleasure in commending to you, members of the class of 1908, this motto of olden time, interpreted in the light of Christ's own teaching and example: It is safe to follow him, to seek our joy where he sought his; to find it, not in receiving, but in giving. We cannot do this by any mere effort of our wills. His *joy* can be ours, only as *he* is ours, and as he himself becomes the soul of our soul and the life of our life. As my last word to you, therefore, I urge you to abide in Christ and to let him abide in you. Only thus can you have that joy of the Lord which brings peace and purity and power; which makes you masters of men because you are their servants, and which insures your participation in the victory and the triumph of Christ.

You are going out to the ends of the earth. These happy days of fellowship are to be followed by separation and, perhaps, by trial. But you go to preach glad news, the glad news of the kingdom, the glad news that the penalty of sin has been borne and that the dominion of sin has been broken. Go with gladness in your hearts, and let your ministry be a ministry of gladness. " Have peace in thine own heart," says Thomas à Kempis, " else thou wilt never be able to communicate peace to others." May God give to you the joy of his salvation, or restore it unto you if you have lost it, so that you may be radiating centers of gladness, beginners and prophets of that glad day when the joy of the Lord shall fill the earth.

Weak and unworthy as we are, it is a wonderful thing that such a gospel is committed to us, and more wonderful still that we can succeed in proclaiming it. Who is sufficient for these things? Truly our sufficiency is of God. May the joy of the Lord be your strength! May he give you the joy of following in his footsteps, the joy of unbroken communion with him, the joy of seeing many brought into that same communion through your words, the joy at last of hearing him say: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

1909

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES

Brethren of the Graduating Class: The laws of our seminary require that its president should address you on this happy, yet momentous, occasion. Though I have been absent for the past year, I gladly avail myself of the opportunity to renew a valued acquaintance and to give you a few parting words of encouragement and of counsel. You have passed your period of scholastic preparation, and the most of you are to enter at once upon your active ministry. It is a glorious but solemn service to which you have devoted yourselves. I bring you both cheer and admonition in the words of the Apostle Paul: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

“Unsearchable riches”—this is the fund upon which you have to draw in your preaching of the gospel. But notice that it is not a vague and intangible fund like the moisture or electricity of the atmosphere, but a concrete embodiment of God’s truth and power, “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Think for a moment what this means. Three things are involved in it. First, that Christ is a present God, Immanuel, God with us, not belonging simply to past history or to the courts of heaven, but here and now, with us always, so that in seeing him we have seen the Father, and by receiving him into our hearts we may be filled unto all the fulness of God. In this agnostic age men are everywhere groping after God, when he is not far from any one of us. Christ is a present God in creation, for every drop of dew and every revolving planet is Christ’s handiwork. Christ is a present God in history, for it is he who is moralizing the nations and conducting evolution to its goal. Conscience is Christ’s light, lighting every man that comes into the world, bond or free, Jew or heathen. But Christ is a present God, in a special sense, to the Christian, for to the Christian he fulfils his promise that he will manifest himself as he does not to the world. And this is a part of the unsearchable riches which you have to preach, that in Christ we have no longer a God far away, unrecognizable, inaccessible, but a God near at hand; nearer to us than the nearest earthly friend, not only filling the universe with his presence, but dwelling in every humble and contrite heart.

But this is only the beginning of the unsearchable riches. The Christ whom we are to preach is not only a present God, but he is an infinite Saviour. The first and greatest need of the world is the pardon of its sin. Those who are not sick will feel no need of a physician, and they who dull the sense of guilt will cry, "Peace, peace!" when there is no peace. So you are to preach the law and the justice of God, whether men hear or forbear. But you have the great privilege of stilling the otherwise inextinguishable sense of guilt by the assurance that Christ, the eternal Lamb of God, has taken upon himself the burden of our sins and has made complete atonement for them, so that the believer may join himself to him who is victor over sin and death, and may become partaker of his justification and his life. In Christ we have pardon for the past. But atonement for sin is not the only part of Christ's saving work. He is not simply a Christ *for* us, but he is a Christ *in* us, a new power of holy living; a deliverer not only from the penalty, but also from the dominion, of sin. I charge you never to forget or to conceal either one of these two essentials of Christianity: Christ as an atoning sacrifice, and Christ as an inward source of righteousness, for both these are needed to make him an infinite Saviour.

The unsearchable riches of Christ include a third gift of which you particularly stand in need, I mean the almighty power of the Holy Spirit. If Paul could say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" how much more we, who have smaller powers and more limited experience. But the unsearchable riches of Christ provide a supply equal to all our needs. By his Spirit he joins himself to us in a union so close that his own life flows into us; we sit with him in heavenly places; he gives us of his power, and things are made to work together for our good. By his Spirit he is made to us wisdom, and he himself speaks through our feeble utterances, so that they convict and convert and sanctify those who hear. The Scriptures give great promises to the preacher. The mighty winds that sweep the forest and prostrate the tallest trees, the floods of rain that pour upon us like the deluge of Noah when the windows of heaven are opened, the conflagrations which lay low whole cities, are only symbols of the power of Christ's Spirit, upon which we may draw in our proclamation of the gospel.

Do not forget that Christ's unsearchable riches provide co-operating agencies of the Holy Spirit to work outside of you also. Great movements are going on in society, in commerce, in education, in government, in international affairs, in the politics of distant nations, all of which are inspired or controlled by him to whom has been given all power in heaven and on earth. The battle against evil may seem to go against us in our narrow environment, while yet the progress over the field in general is marked and sure. Let us hold the fort where we are, in the certainty that our day of victory and rejoicing will come also. Our business is to do the work to which Christ sets us, trusting that the great Commander will make our service an integral part of his strategic plan, and that when he comes in triumph it shall be manifest that our labor was not in vain in the Lord.

These are simple and homely and old-fashioned assurances, my brethren, but they are such as have in all the Christian centuries made heroes and martyrs of the faith. Since you bring to men a present God, an infinite Saviour, and an almighty Holy Spirit, it is grace indeed which has commissioned you to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. You need nothing more than this to ennoble your lives. You need no other object of study, for in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All philosophy and science, all sociology and ethics, are included in him, and if you only apply Christ's truth to all the relations of life, your preaching will be as broad as the world. Since in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, his Cross is the disclosure of the heart of God, the unveiling of the secret of the universe, the manifestation in time of the truth of eternity. I beseech you then to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to us and we to the world.

Have you these unsearchable riches in your possession, so that you can communicate them? I trust you respond gladly: "I know whom I have believed, and I rejoice that I can make him known to others." Abide in Christ by an entire consecration, and let his words abide in you by an appropriating faith. Make sure that you have these unsearchable riches for your own, and then from the heart speak to the heart. So these unsearchable riches—a present God, an infinite Saviour, an almighty Spirit—shall become others' riches also, until our great Redeemer shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. I commend you to him and to the word of his grace, in all confidence that he will make you good ministers of Jesus Christ.

1910

HOLD FAST

Brethren of the Graduating Class: This last day of your seminary course suggests to me the last day of life. The scrutiny to which your work has been subjected is a faint image of the final judgment. These rolls of approval may symbolize the awards of the Judge. But no earthly diploma will admit you to heaven. "Count no man happy till he dies," said Crœsus. Some voyages begin fair, but end in disaster. The runner in the race must not turn aside until the goal is reached. Even Paul would not cease to struggle, lest having preached to others he himself should be a castaway. I give you two words of the apostle as my parting legacy. They are the words, "Hold fast."

Hold fast to your ministry. A call to the ministry is a call from God. Woe be to the man who, being thus called, preaches not the gospel. The most pitiful creatures in our Christian communities are those men who for slight and unworthy reasons have allowed themselves to demit their ministerial work and to enter some purely secular calling. I do not mean that the ministry necessarily requires a man to be preacher and pastor. A teacher, a journalist, a superintendent of missions, may be a true minister of the gospel. I am speaking of the abandonment of the religious work for that which has as motive one's own financial or social or political ambition. Men who selfishly abandon the ministry are ever after miserable, if they are Christians; and they become hardened sinners, if they are not. And yet the temptations to such abandonment are not few. It would be wonderful if they did not at some time present themselves to you. The ministry is not a money-making vocation. Plain living and high thinking go together in it for the most part. The prominent places and the great audiences are only for the few. Human nature in our church-members is not free from fault, nor always easy to deal with. The minister must endure all things for the elects' sakes, and for the sake of Christ, their Lord. And he must reenforce public appeals to the impenitent with what is harder: the private and reiterated reminder that Christ requires their obedience and is waiting to save them. Be faithful in your work as evangelists, and you will win both saints and sinners. Success in the winning of souls will give you a joy that will more than make up for the lack of money or fame, and will make all the arguments for a worldly life seem vapid and inconclusive. Having then a great High Priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

Hold fast to your faith. The only way to be true evangelists is to be truly evangelical. If you hold the substance of the truth, you will be apt to preach it. After having studied Christian doctrine, you ought to be possessed of principles which you cannot surrender except with your lives. There is a faith once for all delivered to the saints, and this faith has been handed down to you. Christ has entrusted to you a stewardship, and for that stewardship you must give account. It is criminal for an apothecary to falsify a prescription, for life or death may depend upon the giving of the proper remedy. It is criminal for the preacher to declare any other gospel than that of Christ and him crucified. And yet the danger of making this mistake is great. It is easy to absorb modern skeptical literature and to neglect the Bible. You can be tossed about by every wind of doctrine, and bring only perplexity and doubt into the minds of those who hear you. Unless some things are settled in your own minds you had better never preach at all. How absurd it is to wabble and apologize and evade when Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and forever, and his truth endures to all generations! I urge you to throw doubt to the winds, and to preach a positive gospel. When Paul drew near to his dying day he congratulated himself that he had kept the faith. He besought Timothy to hold the pattern of sound words which he had heard from his apostolic lips. I have no such claim upon you as the inspired apostle had upon Timothy, but I can rightly bid you hold unwaveringly to my teachings, in so far as I have myself followed Christ.

Hold fast to your integrity. The root of right preaching and of right believing, after all, is in right living. Dante was correct when he made the sins of the intellect to be the result of sins of the heart. Wrong desires, unregulated appetites, evil affections, are at the root of unbelief. And the Christian minister, from his very sanctity of position, is exposed to subtle attacks of the adversary. If Jesus was tempted immediately after the descent of the Spirit upon him at his baptism, much more may his ministers expect that avarice, ambition, vanity, and even sexual pleasure, will weave a delusive web around them which nothing but faith in God will enable them to break. In my day I have seen more than one minister of Christ fall like Lucifer from his high place, and do more harm to Christ's church in a day than they could make up for by long lives of service. But in every such case the fall was sudden only to the world that was looking on. For months and even for years evil had been cherished in the heart, and the public fall was only the outcropping and revelation of secret sin. May God preserve you all from the dreadful fate of apostate preachers of the gospel. But the evil heart is within us all. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Minute conscientiousness in little things is needful if we are to be masters of ourselves in the great, for he that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much.

I have been urging you to hold fast to your ministry, to your faith, to your integrity. I might urge this upon the ground that your own personal salvation demands it. We have no right to think our own souls secure, if we give up our ministry, deny the faith, or sully the integrity of our lives. He that endureth to the end shall be saved, and not all who run the race receive the prize. But I am sure that a motive higher than desire for your own personal salvation animates you to-night. The thought of those whom you are to influence weighs upon your minds. Your ministry, your faith, your integrity, are to be a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death, to those whom you instruct. You are set for the rise, and for the fall, of many in Israel. But you have the promise that if you hold fast to Christ, Christ will hold fast to you. Your ministry will be his ministry. He himself will increase your faith. You will find the panoply of his strength and righteousness about you. Continuing in these, you shall save yourselves and those who hear you.

I must end as I began, by reminding you of that last great day of which this closing day of your course is the faint symbol. We are to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Then our faithfulness or unfaithfulness will appear, not only to us, but to the universe of God. If we have confessed Christ before men, he will confess us before his Father and before the holy angels. If we have denied him, he will deny us. Let us look unto and hasten the coming of the day of God, for, while it will be a day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, it will be a day of deliverance and rejoicing to the righteous. We may not all meet again on earth, but we shall meet then. May Christ our Lord grant us his grace that that day may find us faithful to our trust, and that, having been partakers of his sufferings, we may also be partakers of the glory that is to be revealed!

1911

LEADERSHIP

Brethren of the Graduating Class: You have come to the end of your preparatory training and the most of you will immediately enter upon the work of life. Your conceptions of that work differ in minor particulars, but I believe you all aim to serve Christ in the ministry. There is one aspect of the ministry which is often ignored, though it is of vast importance —I mean its aspect of leadership; and it is "Leadership" of which I would speak to you in these closing words to-night.

The Rochester Theological Seminary cannot train all the saints of God, nor all the ministers of the Baptist denomination. Its proper work is to train leaders of thought and of activity for the churches, men who do not simply fall in with the fashions of the day in doctrine or in practice, or serve as tools for other men to manipulate, but who take Scripture as the word of God and teach others to follow it. Not original leadership, as if the preacher and pastor were himself the authority, but leadership as Christ's interpreters and representatives, with the aim of bringing the church and the world in subjection to him.

I do not need to tell you that Christ's own ministry had for its primary aim the raising up of leaders. After its first year had been spent in a vain appeal to the Jewish rulers, and its second year had been spent in a vain appeal to the Jewish people, its third and last year was devoted to instructing those who were to be his apostles, the pillars of the churches who, after Pentecost, gathered in thousands where our Lord himself had converted only tens. Even Paul trusted not so much to the immediate result of his own labors as he did to those who were to come after him, and so he ordained elders in every church and committed the truth to faithful men who should be able to teach others also.

The world is dependent on leaders, and God has provided them in every age. Abraham, Moses, David, in the Old Testament; Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Luther, Wesley, in later days, show what instructed men can do to mold the thought and the life of the world. The influence of these men has come down to us, and they are our examples. It is doubtful whether any one of us would be in the ministry to-day, if it were not for some shining instance of Christian preaching and consecration which roused our enthusiasm and prompted us to follow.

John R. Mott is a keen observer, and he calls the need of leadership the chief need of our times. We are so influenced by current opinion that the men who can stand up for unpopular truth are rare. Yet they are the men who have the future in their vision, and who compel their contemporaries to press toward it. The Christian minister is a prophet. He is a steward of the mysteries of God. Things that are secret to the world: sin and salvation, Christ and his cross, heaven and hell, have been opened to his gaze. It is required of a steward that he be found faithful. For every particle of the truth committed to him he must give account. He has freely received, only that he may freely give. His office is a self-multiplying one. Every true leader hands on his torch to his successors, and they together accomplish more than he alone ever could

Since this kind of wheat produces some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold, it is of great concern, not simply that there should be much seed, but that the seed sown should be of the right sort. The apostle exhorts Timothy to " keep the good deposit," and the " deposit " is the faith or doctrine delivered to him. There is a " faith once for all delivered to the saints." Our right of leadership continues only so long as we can point to the oracles of God, and can claim that our word agrees with them. When we can buttress up our own utterances with a " Thus saith the Lord," then we need fear no criticism or opposition. True leadership is a leadership which has behind it the word and the Spirit of God. Then the undershepherd can refer to the chief Shepherd for his authority, and can declare that by his word the hearer shall be judged at the last day.

There are four things which I would urge upon you as leaders of the churches, though I can merely mention them. The first is that you are bound to be in advance of the rank and file of your members. In knowledge of the Bible, in thoughtful application of its precepts, in prayerfulness of spirit, you are to be object-lessons to the flock. What you are will be as persuasive as what you say. You are expected to interpret Scripture, and your own belief in its unity, sufficiency, and authority, will insensibly communicate itself to those whom you instruct. You need yourselves, therefore, to be taught of God. Remember that the final and only proof of inspiration is the testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing within us that the Scripture is from God, and so turning the outer word into an inner word that moves and melts the heart.

Secondly, remember that your leadership is not despotism. You are not to lord it over God's heritage, but to secure an intelligent and voluntary following. You may well consult and advise with your older brethren before taking your final stand in matters of moment. There are practical applications of Christianity in which their experience may greatly help you. But, after all, it is you who are to decide what your teaching shall be. Collect opinions when you are in doubt, but form your own opinion as the result. That definite view of yours, though it may not immediately commend itself to others, will be a center around which their ideas will crystallize. A calm and able leader will have followers.

Thirdly, while you are thus in advance of your hearers, be bold to proclaim your faith. You are not simply private individuals, but messengers of almighty God, entrusted with his truth, and commissioned to utter it, whether men will hear or forbear. Learning alone will not suffice. What you know you must utter with conviction, remembering that the fate of men depends upon your word, and that their blood will be required at your hands. Read Baxter's " Reformed Pastor," and be stirred with the sense of your responsibility. You need the spirit of true propagandism, the identification of yourself with those whom you are sent to save, the determination to win them for Christ or to die in the attempt.

And lastly, you need the gentleness as well as the energy which God alone can give. Here is the mistake of some: in praying for power they forget that the only power is love. Law alone, with all its thunders, will not subdue the sinner. With law there must appear the forgiving grace of God, or law will only harden and condemn. True leadership requires self-surrender before it asks surrender from others. Be moved yourself, then you can move those who hear you. You can either rule your church, or you can have the reputation of ruling; but you cannot do both. To conquer opposition you must sink self, hide behind the Cross, show that your only aim is the honor of Christ and the saving of men's souls.

The reward of such leaders is not always immediate. Sometimes the truth uttered seems lost and fruitless. But like seed hidden in the moist earth it germinates after a time, and though the sower may not do the reaping, he that sows and he that reaps shall at last rejoice together. The reward may not come at once, but it is sure. God's word shall not return to him void. What Jesus promised to his apostles he promises also to all the faithful leaders of his people: " Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

It is right to desire the office of a leader in the kingdom of God. Because we are persuaded that you have been called by God to this high office, we rejoice in your choice of the ministry. Our confidence in you has been strengthened by every successive year of your seminary course. We have high hopes of your success in whatever sphere of labor is appointed for you. Though you may be scattered over many lands, and may never meet together again on earth, you will, by one omnipresent Spirit, have access to the Father, and Christ will be with you always, even to the end of the world, for in him all his scattered followers are bound together. May God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you, make you effective leaders of God's people and good ministers of Jesus Christ!

1912

THE REWARDS OF THE MINISTRY

BRETHREN OF THE GRADUATING CLASS: One's last words ought to be one's best words, and I have asked myself how I could most usefully employ these few moments of my fortieth annual address. One passage of Scripture has come repeatedly into my mind, and I make that the theme of my remarks: "Be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." The exhortation to faithful service is accompanied with joyful reminder that no toil undergone for Christ is ever permitted to be fruitless. My three years of intimate acquaintance with you enables me to take for granted your patient continuance in well-doing. And so I speak to you to-night only of "The Rewards of a Faithful Ministry."

Paul's assurance is in view of the resurrection and the judgment. The great final day has been looming up before him. Only then will the full meaning of an earthly life be known. Man's verdict is of little account. The rewards of time are of little value. But to have the Judge of all at the last approve our work—that will be reward indeed. Let us look forward to that day, and ask ourselves what reward shall be ours if we are true stewards of the mysteries of God, and are found faithful to him who has called us to be his ministers.

My first answer is that we shall save our own souls. That is not the highest motive to faithfulness, but it is one of the motives which God sets before us. I have no doubt that he has called some of us into the ministry partly for the reason that that calling is the only one which could divert our minds from sensual gratification or financial gain or political ambition, and so save us from destruction in time and in eternity. If to rescue us at the first required the shedding of Christ's blood, our subsequent preservation has required all the agencies of his Providence and the power of his Spirit. Even the righteous scarcely are saved; and, when they stand on the shore of the sea of death in which their enemies are finally overthrown, they will sing a song of deliverance more heartfelt than that of the children of Israel at the Red Sea. Our own eternal salvation, in spite of foes without and of treachery within, will itself be a reward worthy of all our striving.

But virtue is also its own reward, and external salvation would be of little value if unaccompanied by inward purity and peace. In this life no one of us can say that he has already attained or is already perfect. We hunger and thirst after righteousness, but are not yet filled. We long to be pure in heart, but we do not yet see God as do the holy ones before his throne. We press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And the apostle intimates that the prize is the complete transformation of body and soul into the likeness of Christ, " who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself."

The saving of my own soul, even when this includes likeness to Christ in body and in spirit, is but a small part of the true minister's reward. Christ's Spirit has taught him that he that saveth his life shall lose it. The very essence of the gospel is the merging of our personal interests in the interests of others. A deep sense of the value of men's souls, the danger to which they are exposed, their dependence on us for warning and direction, lead us to identify ourselves with them, and to urge upon them the acceptance of Christ as their Saviour. The joy of the Lord into which the minister of Christ enters is the joy of rescuing sinners, of hearing the prodigal say: " Father, I have sinned," of seeing Satan fall from heaven, shorn of his power and overcome by the Spirit of God. And as the faithful minister shares the joy of heaven over one sinner that repents, so at the last his reward will largely consist in the knowledge that some who would otherwise have dwelt eternally in misery are now kings and priests unto God. " Here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me," he can say with Christ, and can find in them with Paul his glory and his crown.

No personal attainment and no work for others' good could constitute reward, unless it satisfied the demands of our moral nature. Paul says that his glorying is this, the testimony of his conscience that in holiness and sincerity of God he behaved himself in the world. That we have done right when there was temptation to do wrong, that we have resisted the world, the flesh, and the devil, that we have lived for the highest ends, that we have fulfilled the divine commission and have finished the work God gave us to do —this is a reward indeed. Shakespeare understood human nature when he put into the mouth of Cardinal Wolsey, even when degraded by his king, the words:

> I know myself now; and I feel within me
> A peace above all earthly dignities,
> A still and quiet conscience.

But to know ourselves perfectly is impossible to men, apart from God's enlightenment. Paul will not trust his own judgment, but declares: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." In the last great day a conscience that approves, because it reflects the judgment of the holy God, will be the exceeding great reward of the faithful minister.

Yet there is something better still; I mean the personal vision and welcome and fellowship of Christ. To see the King in his beauty, to hear him say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," and when we see him, to be like him, will be worth all the sorrow and trial of an earthly life. The light affliction which, after all, is but for a moment, will work out for us an eternal weight of glory. Having been faithful over a few things we shall be made rulers over many things,

> And every power find sweet employ
> In that eternal world of joy.

Christ himself will show us plainly of the Father; what we know not now of earth's problems we shall know hereafter; in his presence there shall be fulness of joy, and at his right hand there shall be pleasures for evermore.

If this were a Mohammedan paradise that were offered us, we might well doubt. But it is perfectly consistent with the law of growth and evolution. It will be only the manifestation of the sons of God, the outshining of the hidden glory which, all through our earthly life and work, has been the secret of success and victory; the mere culmination of a vision of Christ and a communion with Christ, which are the essence of Christianity. He whom not having seen we have loved will then reward us with the full revelation of his glory, and will make us partakers of his throne. Nothing is too great for those who are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. For all things are ours, both life and death, and things present, and things to come; all things are ours, because we are Christ's and Christ is God's.

Let us not look at the things which are seen, but at those which are unseen; for the things that are seen are temporal, while the things that are not seen are eternal. For the joy that was set before him, Christ endured the cross, despising the shame. Let us follow him in the Christian race and ministry, for he is not only the author but also the perfecter of our faith. He who himself gained the prize, and is now set down at the right hand of God, will give us the prize, and will seat us with himself upon his throne. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him.

And yet there is a larger reward in the triumph of the kingdom. We have identified ourselves with Christ, but Christ has identified himself with humanity. He will not be satisfied, nor shall we be satisfied until the whole human race is brought back to God. When complete victory has perched upon Christ's banners and the soldiers in the long war against sin come marching home, the greatest of all rewards will be the assurance that our little service has been made an indispensable factor in the triumph of our Lord, and that he has accepted that service as done to himself. We shall share in the honors of that day, yet shall gladly confess that these honors are all of grace and not of debt, and that all the praise belongs to him who has wrought in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. In the glory of Christ and the triumph of his kingdom we shall find our all-comprehending and eternal reward.

I shall always remember this class with peculiar interest and affection, not only because of my personal relations to its individual members, but because in it I see the last set of recipients of my instruction. I must be judged henceforth more by what I have done than by what yet remains for me to do. I am too conscious of the defects of my work to have any pride in it. Yet I have tried, with the help of God, to teach the truth as it is in Jesus, and to train men who will teach others also. I have had great joy in finding you receptive, yet at the same time independent. I would not have you follow me in all details, but only in the broad and general drift of my teaching. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

But the essentials of Christian doctrine I would have you stand by, at the risk of life itself. In all confidence that you will do this, and in solemn prospect of that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed and you and I alike shall be judged by the standard of eternal truth, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace. Upon our faithfulness everlasting interests depend, both for ourselves and for others, for the world and for Christ's cause. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord."

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